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FIVE YEARS IN A PROTESTANT SISTERHOOD

AND

TEN YEARS IN A CATHOLIC CONVENT.

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

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LONDON:
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
1869.

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TO THE READER.

In the following pages, while facts have been carefully narrated, it is hoped without passion or prejudice, the writer has concealed the names of *persons* under fictitious titles for obvious reasons.

The writer's facts will be viewed in various ways, but she begs to assure the reader that her one desire has been to avoid every exaggeration, and even the least shadow of misrepresentation.

PREFACE.

A PREFACE is generally passed over by the reader as an appendage to the rest of the volume; necessary, perhaps, for the author to write, but quite unnecessary for the reader to peruse. For many reasons I hope this will not be the fate of the present Preface; and for many reasons I request that it may be read carefully before any other part of the work. My motive in writing this Autobiography would not, perhaps, interest the reader; but there is one motive that may be presumed, which I wish to contradict in anticipation. It will be said, very naturally, that I have intended this as a retort on the Saurin case. Nothing could be further from my thoughts. I have purposed for many years to write some such work as the present; but I do not regret that I have delayed doing so until now, as each year's knowledge of Convent life must add weight to the narrative of my experience of it.

I have also limited myself, as closely as possible, to the relation of circumstances of which I have had personal experience. Had I departed from this rule, I might have made the volume twice as large; and I could have given many details, on the authority of others, which would have confirmed my own statements about the strange imitation of Catholic conventual life practised in Miss Jones's Sisterhood.

I do not for a moment suppose that all Anglican Sisterhoods—and there are, I believe, many such established now—are carried out in the same way; but I do say, where such are established under vows of perpetual obedience made to a clergyman—not only unauthorised to receive such vows, but actually forbidden in spirit, if not in letter, to receive them by the rules of his Church—they must be an imposture, and cannot succeed. As voluntary associations of pious women for holy purposes, they do succeed; but as imperfect imitations of the religious life of the Catholic Church, they must and do fail. Miss Jones's career is simply a type of what may be expected when poor humanity is left unguided and unrestrained, when unlimited power over others is given either to men or women, and when to such power is superadded the moral influence of what I must be pardoned for calling religious fanaticism. Such

unlimited power is never given in the Catholic Church; every Superior being subject to the rules of his order, and to higher ecclesiastical authority.

And it is not a little curious that, while the High Church papers have been loudly denouncing the Catholic conventual system as a failure, Protestant writers, with less prejudice and more honesty, have in several instances called public attention to the fact, that, while Catholic Convents are inspected by Catholic bishops, Protestant Sisterhoods are under no control whatsoever. A letter in 'Public Opinion' for March 6, 1869, signed J. M'Grigor Allan, has the following remarkable and candid passage. Alluding to Miss Goodman's work on Sisterhoods in the Church of England, he says: 'The Sisterhood [Miss Sellon's] once so useful, so practically charitable, whose members were so happy, has become a complete Catholic Convent—only more so! That is to say, it possesses all the evils of a convent without any of its restraints to the abuse of authority. Even in Rome no Superior is permitted to rule despotically over the inmates of a convent without the supervision of a bishop. The beauty of our Protestant nunneries is that we take measures to provide against the possibility of awkward revelations of the secrets of the prison-house. In our Protestant

convents, not recognised by ecclesiastical authorities, and subjected to no supervision, either from clergy or magistracy, or any authority, the discipline is sometimes more stringent, more distressing to mind and body, than in Catholic establishments. Thus, while continually raving against the encroachments of Rome, we permit the organisation of Protestant nunneries, administered in a far more despotic and arbitrary manner than Romish convents. We are fostering a nursery, not of semi-Papists, but full-blown Papists, of grown children who, playing at Popery, even exaggerate the very defects of the system which they imitate; and it would probably be a positive relief to many of the inmates of these Protestant nunneries if they could pass under the direct rule of the Romish Church.

'The Catholic nun surrenders her liberty to a Superior, who is in turn responsible to a higher authority, emanating, as she believes, from one who is the human source of all authority, as the visible head of the Church. The Protestant nun, pitying the blindness of her Catholic sister, surrenders her liberty, and takes vows of implicit obedience—to whom? to another woman, a weak, erring fellow-being, who, while repudiating allegiance to the Pope, ignoring all authority, ecclesiastical and civil, desirous of being inde-

pendent of her country's laws, actually sets up her title to infallibility, plays at Popery on her own account, and, in this free and enlightened country, asserts her claim to be an irresponsible autocrat over her little flock of good but silly women, who call obedience to a she-tyrant a religious life!'

I know nothing of the writer of this letter, but I gather from the tone of the remaining portion that he is one who would wish to see 'Monks' and 'Catholic Convents' obliterated for ever; and that while he thoroughly hates both, he has honesty enough to admit that we regulate them well on the whole.

Of the necessity for the episcopal supervision of Protestant convents no one could write too strongly; but the truth is, that the very words Protestant and Convent ill assort together; and it is hopeless to expect that such establishments will ever be patronised by Church of England prelates, since they were never intended to exist in the Church of England by its founders. Surely the very men who renounced the vows which they had made to observe the monastic life, could not be expected to frame regulations in anticipation for its continuance. And even in those cases, few as they are, where any kind of episcopal supervision has been attempted, the object has been to

prevent the visitor from knowing the real state of the house; making his visitation a perfect mockery. What I have related about this matter in connection with the Helston Sisterhood will perhaps be a sufficient proof of this. In Miss Goodman's work (page 205), she mentions the case of a Protestant Sisterhood where the Sisters put away the crucifixes generally in use until after the visit of the bishop's chaplain, when they were again brought out to be employed as before.

This lady also mentions the horror of a Catholic Superior when informed by her of the mode of life practised at Miss Sellon's establishment, which Miss Goodman had just left. The particular subject referred to was the 'Platonic friendship' between Miss Sellon and Dr. Pusey. Of this Miss Goodman writes thus:—'And for my own part, I cannot tell how any can continue to venerate, for their wisdom and holiness, persons of mature age who cannot sacrifice their own private feelings to decorum and duty, when they exact the sacrifice of earthly ties from the Sisters whom they govern. . . . I affirm that it is not right, if only for the sake of others, for persons in such a position thus to disregard the conventionalities of life because they find great pleasure in the society of each other.'

The Catholic Superior to whom Miss Goodman mentioned her views on this subject, 'declared it to be most disedifying, and said such a thing could not exist in any Roman Catholic house.' In her simplicity [she was a Belgian lady] she said, 'I was told you Anglicans had bishops?' We replied, 'Oh yes, we have.' 'Then do they not visit your houses? Surely some of the Sisters would tell the bishop of such a thing as this.' (Page 203.) In the constitutions of the order to which I belong we have the following rule:—'The Abbess will take all possible care that the real state of the Convent be not, either by herself or others, kept from the knowledge of the Visitor, as this, if done, would be a grievous breach of duty, for which severe punishment should be inflicted.'

Practically the very reverse holds good when any attempt is made by Protestant bishops to visit Protestant Sisterhoods.

At the Church Congress in Dublin, which was attended by the Bishop of Oxford, the Bishop of Derry spoke thus:—'It seemed to him that the High Church and Low Church papers treated the bishops in very much the same way as the ancient Egyptians treated the very respectable persons whom they called in for the purpose of discharging the sacred function of embalming

the dead; for, after those persons had fulfilled their office, immediately after they left the house, they followed them, uttering the most hideous execrations, and throwing stones at them. Whenever blows were given the bishops had their share of them.'

I know that many will use the Saurin case as an argument to prove that great evils may happen in Catholic Convents as well as in Protestant Sisterhoods. Evils may happen anywhere, for no state of life is exempt from temptation; but there is simply this difference between the Catholic Convent and the Protestant Sisterhood. If evils arise in the former, there is an express provision made for their removal; and had this been used in the case in question, it would never have come before the public. Of course, if any Catholic priests or nuns prefer having their religious difficulties settled by a Protestant court of law, no one can prevent them from doing so. The Catholic Church and the Catholic conventual system, carefully legislated for by the Catholic Church, allowed an appeal from Mrs. Starr to the Bishop of Beverley, the bishop of the diocese, from the Bishop of Beverley to the Archbishop of Westminster, as metropolitan, and, finally, from the Archbishop to the Pope. Those who would not be satisfied with these resources, or who would not even

avail themselves of them, are scarcely worthy of the name of Catholic. It matters little on which side the blame lay, if the lawful ecclesiastical remedy was not sought. Of course, if the appeal to Rome had been carried out, and the decision had been adverse, the appellants might have repudiated this decision; but in this case they would have ceased to act as Catholics, and by their protest would virtually have become Protestants. I myself know of an instance in which a Jesuit priest refused to submit to his ecclesiastical superiors, and eventually became a Protestant. Such cases are rare indeed, thank God, but they are not impossible.

I have said so much about the Saurin case elsewhere, that it seems unnecessary to refer further to it here. The public, whether High Church or Low Church, prejudged the case, and assumed that Miss Saurin must be right. It was precisely what the public might be expected to do. In any similar case, should such ever arise, or in any difference, should there ever be such, between a Catholic bishop and a Catholic priest, the public would at once side with the protesting nun or clergyman, simply because the nun or clergyman would, in such a case, be carrying out its preconceived ideas.

It does not seem to have ever occurred to the

public that if Miss Saurin had, in the opinion of the Chief Justice, 'been guilty of the grossest exaggeration,' and thus deceived her brother, she may also have deceived her other relatives. It is, at least, certain that her relatives were ignorant of the very rudiments of what is technically called the religious life; nor is it any disgrace to lay Catholics if they are not informed on such subjects. Unless a Catholic has a vocation to the cloister, he is not called in any way to make himself acquainted with the practices of the counsels of perfection. If this lady's family had given even a slight consideration to the subject, they would not have considered it any degradation for their daughter to be employed in the laundry at Baggot Street. There are no distinctions of rank, or class, or occupations in Convents; and the very fact of a nun's having made a vow of poverty indicates that, whatever her social position may have been, she thereby places herself in the ranks of the poor; while her vow of obedience indicates her willingness to be employed for the service of the poor in whatever way her superiors may direct.

I am aware, also, that much has been said of the very strange letters of Miss Saurin's Jesuit brother. Had he not been a Jesuit, probably the remarks would

not have been so severe. His description of her superiors at Baggot Street as 'tyrants and torturers' was certainly rather disedifying; but, as I have before observed, Jesuits are not infallible. I have known some who lived most saintly, self-denying lives; some whose humility was so deep, that to injure them seemed to be the surest method of gaining their best services. I have known others who would fire up at even an imaginary insult, and would write most bitterly and act most harshly towards those from whom they even fancied they had received an injury. Again and again it must be repeated, that Jesuits, monks, and nuns are not infallible; that they are subject to the common temptations of humanity; that, as a very learned, very holy, and truly humble Jesuit has lately observed, they are 'men and women;' and that some are more fervent, more earnest, and therefore more saintly, than others.

In conclusion, may I be allowed to say one word to the High Churchman who may be reading this Preface. I fear much that is contained herein will give him great pain: will he believe my earnest assurance that I would rather suffer anything myself than inflict even the slightest suffering on others? But truth is above and beyond all other considerations; and I hope

I have only sought truth in this narrative, and in any remarks I may make in connection therewith. Those who are wandering in darkness, yet seeking for light, must ever have our most earnest sympathy; but it is no charity to them to assure them that they are on the right road when they are wandering far from it, or to applaud their attempts to imitate Catholic practices, if they rest in them, and take this applause as an assurance that by imitating Catholic practices they have attained Catholic truth.

CONVENT OF _____

Second Monday after Easter, 1869.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

Introductory remarks — Early religious impressions — Various clergymen and their various opinions—A Protestant clergyman's treatment of a cross—A surplice with its consequences — Early recollections of a good old clergyman — Sorrow and suffering—The immediate causes which led me to join a Sisterhood—A Chapel of Ease and its 'Admiral'—My first Idea of a Visible Church — How I was educated into Puseyism — I obtain books of devotion privately printed—My first confession . . . . . PAGES 1—16

CHAPTER II.

Arrangements to enter a Sisterhood—I select Miss Langdon's in preference to Miss Jones's—My reception at the Sisterhood—A Protestant 'Retreat'—Some account of the Sisters and the School—The Rule, and how it was adapted from the Rule of the Catholic Sisters of Mercy for our use — it was further adapted for the Bishop—Anglican Sisters say 'Office' twice over—Explanation of the Office . . . . . 17—37

CHAPTER III.

Vows made without the knowledge of the Bishop—Extraordinary fasts sanctioned — Death of a Sister from fasting — Extreme Unction administered to her by a Protestant Bishop — Kindness of the Sisters to each other—Debates about going to Communion on Good Friday—A troublesome Postulant—A pair of shoes

and a vocation—A lady wishing to abstain from food entirely, and live on the bread and wine of the Protestant Communion . . . . . PAGES 38—47

CHAPTER IV.

Women living together do not necessarily quarrel—No instruction given of any kind to those who came to be Sisters—Boots and bonnets—Anything which causes sin to be committed cannot be called trifling—Miss Jones tries to obtain rule over our Sisterhood—Explanation of the different views of the religious life in our Sisterhood and in Miss Jones's—Dr. Pusey's opinion—The Bishop of Oxford's opinion—What Catholic theology teaches on the subject of Vows and Religious Life . . 48—60

CHAPTER V.

The Crimean War—My brother joins the army—Some of our Sisters ordered abroad—Miss Jones previously has obtained a promise of obedience from Miss Langdon—We are deceived in this matter—Miss Langdon is required by Miss Jones to take charge of a lunatic—Presence of mind, and self-forgetfulness of the former—I am placed in difficulties during her absence—I apply to our Parish Clergyman—His advice contrary to that of Miss Langdon—Midnight expedition in search of a lunatic nurse—Our Sisters unite with Miss Langdon in going to the Crimea—Miss Jones thereby becomes head of our Sisterhood—Reasons why I choose to remain with her . . 61—71

CHAPTER VI.

Difference between Miss Jones's view of the religious life and ours—She constitutes herself Superior—Miss Jones alters and amends the Rule of St. Benedict for her children—A manifestation of popular feeling against Miss Jones in a railway carriage—Our arrival and cheerless reception—Neglect of the Office—Some account of the work in Miss Jones's establishment—The Charitable labours greatly exaggerated—The orphans few and neglected—The Poor School badly attended—The College for Boys and Club for Men prosperous, but unfit work for women—Money recklessly wasted everywhere—The Clewer Sisterhood better managed . . . . . 72—85

CHAPTER VII.

The dress worn by Protestant Sisters—Some account of a Catholic Novitiate—The distinction between Postulant, Novice, and Professed Sisters at Helston and Weston Mere consisted only in the dress—Miss Jones's peculiar arrangements—She has four different classes of Sisters—She adopts some ideas from Episcopacy and some from Dissent—No instruction given to the Sisters as to their duties—A 'Child' asks should she steal if desired, and is not contradicted—A day's journey taken by six persons to go to Confession—Miss Jones's peculiar ideas about Confession——She does not allow any Sister to go to Confession unless she is in the house—Painful facts about her intercourse with Dr. Smithson . . . . . PAGES 86—99

CHAPTER VIII.

Miss Jones's view of the duties of a Superior—Her luxurious living and indolence—The excuse for it—Examples of the obedience Miss Jones required from the Sisters—A midnight expedition—A 'Child' sent at night to get soup for Miss Jones—Illness and death of this lady—Miss Jones's cruel neglect of the poor sufferer—Miss Jones's views of obedience—She took as her model the Protestant idea of a 'Lady Abbess'—Her luxuriousness and self-indulgence—Some account of a Lay Sister—Her trials, and opinion of Miss Jones—Miss Jones's selfishness—Experience of it by another Lay Sister—A contradiction published by a Sister who knew but little of the matter . 100—116

CHAPTER IX.

Miss Jones's idea of the state necessary for a Lady Abbess—Occupations of the Sisters—A printing press set up—Our utter solitude and misery—A silent recreation—A summons from Office to the Superioress—The Sisters left in the Oratory till midnight—The Oratory incensed when Miss Jones attended the Office, and the Sisters required to stand—Miss Jones never went to church, though able to walk about and drive—Dr. Smithson used to say the Communion Service for her alone, contrary to the Rubric and Seventy-first Canon. . . . 117—128

CHAPTER X.

The Sisters were not allowed to see their relatives, or to write to them—I wish to leave the Sisterhood, and am persuaded to remain—A railway journey, and arrival at midnight—I am left alone on the steps of Miss Jones's house, in a large city, at midnight—A day and night at a fashionable hotel—My indignation at this proceeding—Another journey and another residence—A cottage in the country—Our employment—My companion appointed to translate the Offices from the Breviary—Miss Jones passes off the translation as her own—I am left alone in the cottage—Another journey to Weston Mere—My brother calls with his bride and is not allowed to see me . PAGES 129—150

CHAPTER XI.

The Boys' College—A boy flogged, and a Sister obliged to be present—I am left alone in the house with the boys and a man, without a single female companion—I determine to leave Miss Jones and return home—My position at home is very painful—Reasons for this—Changes occur in every family which are felt by those who return after temporary absence—I am blamed for not exercising my own judgment, and condemned if I exercise it—I return to Miss Jones—Reason for doing so—I begin to ask seriously and prayerfully, what is truth—I compare the Bible and Prayer-book . . . . . 151—172

CHAPTER XII.

The immediate causes of my conversion—Ignorance of the poor on religious subjects—A visit to a dying woman—The wine spilled all over the Communion cloth—Indifference manifested by the clergyman—My feelings about it—I determine never to receive Communion in the Protestant Church again—My researches after truth—I call on a Protestant Clergyman for advice, and on a Catholic Priest—The Clergyman is obliged to explain my visit to his family—The Priest assures me my visit to him shall be known only to himself—I visit another Priest—All teach the same doctrine—Dr. Smithson pronounces my future condemnation—I am informed he usually does so to intending converts—My first interview with a Catholic Nun 173—188

CHAPTER XIII.

Opinions of my relatives when they find I am determined to become a Catholic—I am asked seriously how much I pay for getting Absolution—Differences between the conduct of Puseyites and Dissenters towards me after I became a Catholic—Some account of my reception into the Church—The Creed of Pope Pius IX. compared with the Articles of the Church of England—Dr. Pusey's mistiness on doctrinal questions, noticed in a recent pamphlet—Conclusion of Part I. . . . PAGES 189—203

CHAPTER XIV.

I am anxious to become a Nun, and visit different convents—Vocations to the active and contemplative life are quite different—The subject carefully considered—Priests are never anxious to induce ladies to enter convents, and often discourage them—Puseyite friends are scandalised at my dress—Interview with Cardinal Wiseman—His kindness to me only ceases with his life—I find my home at last, and enter the convent at —— Some account of the various Nuns and their occupations—An interview with the Bishop—An account of my Reception and becoming a Novice, and of my profession or receiving the Black Veil . . . . . 207—227

CHAPTER XV.

My Novitiate—The various occupations of the day—We rise at five to imitate our Lord's example—Mass at seven—The Sisters serve each other in the refectory—Explanation of how we fulfil the Vow of Poverty by serving each other, and the poor—We consider it an honour to do this—Explanation of the practical working of the Vow of Obedience—Its utility—Its Divine origin—The Schools—Some account of the daily occupations in convents which I have visited—The Sisters of Mercy in Blandford Square—The Dominicanesses at Stone—The Deaf and Dumb Institution at Cabra—Anecdotes of our Children 228—246

CHAPTER XVI.

Continuation of the account of a Nun's daily occupation—Recreation—The conversation of Nuns—Intellectual culture of Nuns—

Proof that they must be, as a general rule, highly educated—Some account of the ceremony of Reception or taking the White Veil—The Novice is questioned publicly and replies publicly—Dante's 'Purgatory'—Nuns are not all perfect, though living in a state in which they aim at perfection—Taking the Black Veil—Explanation of the Vows—Vows are of different kinds—Vows must be made to a lawfully-constituted authority—Dispensations from Vows . . . . . PAGES 247—263

CHAPTER XVII.

A Convent Novitiate—Some account of two ladies who were sent from the convent, and the cause of their unfitness for our life—Trials of my Novitiate—Two instances given of this—An anecdote of two old Nuns—Illness and death of a Religious—The thoughtful care and love of her Superior—Devotion of the Superior to the Sisters in sickness—Conventual regulations—Elections, how they are conducted—The annual visitation—Importance of this regulation—An instance of its practical working—The Superior even more restrained by the rules than those whom she governs—The regulations made by the Church for convent discipline cannot be explained away—The Ordinary Confessor and the Extraordinary Confessor—The romantic view of convent life—St. Francis of Sales and 'Echoes'—True romance and false romance—Tennyson's St. Agnes's Eve—Miracles still occur—An account of two miraculous cures, one in a convent in Ireland, and one in a convent in Italy . 264—297

CHAPTER XVIII.

Some remarks on the Saurin case—Reply to the theories of different writers—The High Church view—The Broad Church view—The Low Church view—The 'Guardian' and 'Church Times'—The 'Saturday' and 'London Review'—Serious mistakes made by all those writers about the religious life—Nuns are not made perfect by the fact of making Vows—Nuns are women, with the faults of women, but they are trying to overcome these faults—Difference between the Girl of the Period and the Nun—Conclusion . . . . . 298—318

NOTES . . . . . 319—324

FIVE YEARS IN A PROTESTANT SISTERHOOD

AND

TEN YEARS IN A CATHOLIC CONVENT.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS — EARLY RELIGIOUS IMPRESSIONS — VARIOUS CLERGYMEN AND THEIR VARIOUS OPINIONS — A PROTESTANT CLERGYMAN'S TREATMENT OF A CROSS — A SURPLICE WITH ITS CONSEQUENCES — EARLY RECOLLECTIONS OF A GOOD OLD CLERGYMAN — SORROW AND SUFFERING — THE IMMEDIATE CAUSES WHICH LED ME TO JOIN A SISTERHOOD — A CHAPEL OF EASE AND ITS 'ADMIRAL' — MY FIRST IDEA OF A VISIBLE CHURCH — HOW I WAS EDUCATED INTO PUSEYISM — I OBTAIN BOOKS OF DEVOTION PRIVATELY PRINTED — MY FIRST CONFESSION.

BEFORE I commence the actual narrative of my residence in a Protestant Sisterhood, it may be necessary to give a brief account of the motives and causes which led me to take so important a step; and my younger readers, whether High Church, Low Church, or Broad Church, will doubtless wish to know something of the time when a 'Confessional' in a Protestant church would have caused a riot sufficiently formidable to require military aid to quell it, and when those who thought of 'entering Sisterhoods' whispered their hopes and fears in trembling tones to their spiritual advisers.

I was educated in the doctrines of the Church of England, and until I had entered my twentieth year my religious opinions were such as are usually designated as Evangelical. I was taught to believe that a great deal of 'Popery' remained in the Book of Common Prayer, and a great deal more in the Homilies and Articles. I was not allowed to learn the Church Catechism, and as a child rejoiced in the prohibition which spared me an additional lesson. At the fashionable boarding-school where my education was completed, there was but little thought of religion; true, the girls learned texts every Sunday, but they flung the Bible from end to end of the long schoolroom after, and made jokes and puns over the sacred words which were perhaps less irreverent in intention than in sound.

My greatest friends and most intimate companions were the daughters of clergymen; and they, I am glad to think, never joined in this, though I cannot say that we in any way reflected on its being wrong either to ourselves or others. We were habituated to an exterior reverence; our companions certainly were not.

I left school at an unusually early age, having only completed my sixteenth year. I had learned the usual amount of accomplishments, but one particle of solid instruction I had not. Alas! when the 'Girls of the Period' are taunted with frivolity and indifference, do their censurers ever ask how the 'Mothers of the Period' were educated? There are rare examples of

women elevating themselves above early impressions, and the evils of a neglect of solid education; but such exceptions are rare, and, as a rule, the girl is what the mother has been.

When I left school I began to educate myself, and devoted many hours of the day to solid reading. The High Church movement was in its first fresh fervour; young curates were astonishing their congregations and irritating their unfortunate rectors by wearing a surplice in the pulpit; a 'vestment' would not have entered into their most sanguine hopes of future development. It had begun, however, to be fashionable to have a cross embossed on the Book of Common Prayer; and the more advanced even ventured on wearing gilt crosses raised on the cover. About this time a near relative, the Rev. W——, came to spend a few months with us, accompanied by his eldest daughter. Our parish church we never thought of attending; the rector was a timid young man, equally afraid of Rome and Geneva, and contriving by his indecision to please no one, and to empty his church. The neighbouring parish had for its guide a very young man also; but his thin and terribly emaciated appearance gave credit to the assertion that he was 'a rank Puseyite,' that he prayed a great deal more than his neighbours, and that he fasted, which his neighbours certainly did not do. He had begun to wear a surplice when preaching, and his sermons were attracting much attention; his high

moral character and earnestness added weight to his words; the 'white flag of Popery' attracted thousands—standing room could not be found in the aisles, and the churchyard was as closely packed as the church.

There was an Independent Chapel very near our residence, where a good homely minister preached good homely sermons; and this was the place of worship my family usually attended, our clerical relation, like Mr. Voysey, not seeing any distinction between one minister and another. There was also a Chapel of Ease which we sometimes frequented—of which more hereafter—and a Free Church. The latter was a speculation of a Protestant clergyman who had objections to some few expressions in the Book of Common Prayer, and who thought that both his conscience and his purse would be more comfortable if he set up for himself. He still considered himself a member of the Church of England, indignantly repudiated the name of Dissenter, since he had as much right to separate from the Church of England and still consider himself a member of the Universal Church, of which it was a 'branch,' as his High Church friends had to keep separate from Rome and yet consider themselves Catholic. His plan answered, his church was crowded, and in a pecuniary point of view the speculation was excellent.

The daughter of our clerical relation, a girl a few years older than myself, either from conviction or love of novelty, professed herself High Church. She pur-

chased one of the fashionable prayer books with a very prominent gilt cross. On her return she left the book on the drawing-room table, and in less time than it takes to write this sentence, her father had seized it, cut off the cross with a penknife, mutilated it and the cover so that henceforth it would be useless, and ended by flinging the 'accursed thing' violently to the end of the apartment.

My cousin had never been troubled with any very deep religious impressions, and was too long accustomed to her father's violence of temper to be much disturbed by his performance. I was at the time an 'Evangelical,' and rather admired his zeal against the emblem of Popery, and the other members of our family coincided in my view.

Some important public events occurred about this time which led me to investigate the doctrines and practices of the Church to which I belonged with more than ordinary interest. The Gorham case had been just decided, and, as many of my relatives were clergymen of the Church of England, I heard much discussion on the subject. It seemed to me one of very great importance. It could not surely be a matter of doubt as to whether a child was or was not regenerated by baptism. The question seemed a very simple one, notwithstanding all the legal and theological technicalities with which it was surrounded. A very brief *résumé* of the case may not be uninteresting to those

to whom it is now a matter of history. The Bishop of Exeter had refused to institute the Rev. Mr. Gorham to the vicarage of Brampford Speke, because that gentleman did not believe that by the Sacrament of Baptism the person who received it, whether infant or adult, was freed thereby from the guilt of original sin, or, if he had come to years of discretion, from the guilt of actual sin. Very strong language was used on both sides. The High Church party protested loudly before the judgment, but lapsed quietly into silent submission after it. Everything was argued, and everybody argued. The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council decided in favour of Mr. Gorham, and said that 'in the Church of England many points of theological doctrine had not been decided, and Baptismal Regeneration among the number.' The bishop then carried the case into three law courts; still the decision was adverse, and he also quietly submitted under protest, not, however, without having accused the Archbishop of Canterbury of being a 'promoter and supporter of these heresies.' Dr. Pusey also declared that 'the Privy Council could not continue to be the judge of heresy in the English Church,' and yet it still continues to be. If the matter had been submitted to the opinion, say by ballot, of every clergyman of the English Church, no unprejudiced person can for a moment doubt that the decision of an overwhelming majority would have coincided with that of the courts of law.

A strong reaction now set in. Anti-Puseyite riots became the order of the day. In one of them the Rev. Mr. C——, whom I have mentioned as the wearer of a surplice in the pulpit, almost lost his life. Looking back calmly, after a lapse of so many years, it seems strange that a man should have made the sacrifices which he unquestionably did make for so trifling a purpose. He *would* wear his white surplice in the pulpit. His church wardens protested, his friends implored, his congregation threatened, the 'roughs' of the city yelled and hooted, but Mr. C—— continued the surplice, until an early grave terminated his career. Probably had he lived a little longer his views would have changed entirely.

In this case no question of doctrine was involved. About the same time, a clerical friend, the son of Sir Thomas ——, came to pass the examination of the bishop's chaplain, previous to being permitted 'to teach and preach' in the diocese. He came to us every evening, and amused a large family party (we were relatives) with his ingenious evasions of the close questioning which every cleric had then to endure. I cannot remember at this moment how the affair terminated, but I think the reverend candidate was rejected.

I had now fairly satisfied myself that the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration was taught in Holy Scripture. It never occurred to me to trouble myself as to whether

it was necessary that the Church should teach it also. I had been brought up, as far as I was taught religion at all, to take the Bible as the rule of faith; and I could not see why different people should not have different opinions as to its meaning—why the Protestant Church, founded on the very principle of liberty of conscience, should not allow, as in fact it did allow, Mr. Gorham to hold one opinion, and the Bishop of Exeter to hold another. I remember about this time also having very warm controversies with a Socinian, and feeling rather puzzled by his *tu quoque* line of argument. I claimed the Bible as my rule of faith, and believed that our Lord Jesus Christ was God. He claimed the Bible as his rule of faith, and believed that Jesus Christ was a mere man. There was the utmost length of blasphemy between us on one side and the other. But if the Bible was to be judged and interpreted by the individual, who was to decide which of us was right? and yet the question was an awful one.

A friend with strong Calvinist views had already obtained much influence over me, and God only knows what agony of mind I suffered for several years in consequence. From my very childhood I had been strongly impressed with the deepest religious feeling. One of my earliest recollections was seeing the venerable face of an aged clergyman gazing fondly on myself and a party of little ones when we assembled from time to time in a large pew in the church, and

whom he used to address in the simplest language. We lived then in the country, and he took the illustrations most familiar to us, and used them in the most familiar way. His favourite subject was the Good Shepherd, and how He loved His lambs: those early and simple lessons I never forgot, and as there were then no books on religious subjects in any way suited for children, I used to try to find out the stories in the Bible, and often went away by myself to read them, though I then understood but little of what I read. As I grew older, the dark and deadly terrors of Calvinism chased away the loving recollections of my youth. I dreaded to close my eyes at night, lest I should wake in the morning in Hell, for I never could comfort myself as others did with an 'assurance' of my salvation. If a certain number were born to be damned, what had I done to deserve exemption from this terrible fate? All that I suffered can never be known in this world; those nearest to me never suspected it, and if they had, probably could have given me but little consolation. I went to church in despair, and I left it in despair; I rose in despair, and I retired to rest in despair; but at length some relief came, principally however from causes which cannot be mentioned here.

The exterior life must always tell upon the inner existence, however we may hide cause and effect even from ourselves. Of my outer life I do not wish to

speak. It had been one of peculiar and unusual trial even from childhood. For a brief period I had a glimpse of earthly sunshine, or rather a flood of the purest and best of earthly happiness. In one brief moment, unforeseen, and utterly unexpected, darkness came down upon my life, and my health, always frail, gave way entirely under the desolating pressure of mental anguish. For two long years I was hovering between life and death. I was carried, when able to rise at all, from the bed to the sofa, and from the sofa to an easy open carriage for a slow drive of half an hour. It was during this period that I first thought of becoming a Protestant Sister of Mercy, and as soon as I had recovered sufficiently to be able to dispense with personal attendance and home luxuries, I carried out my intention. Will it weary you if I say a few words more about the gradual development of ideas which led to this change of life?

We had come from the seaside to the very heart of the city of which I have already written so much, and our town residence was close to the chapel of ease before mentioned. This chapel was in the hands of trustees, or, more properly speaking, in the hands, and under the sole management, of the wife of one of the trustees. Her husband, an old naval officer of bright and genial spirit, was the nominal head of the committee; the 'Admiral,' as his lady was usually designated, was master of the ship. Great in blanket societies, Dorcas

societies, evangelical tea parties, mothers' meetings, coal tickets, and soup, the Admiral was the presiding genius and motive power of much real good, and, notwithstanding a certain unpleasant (I had almost said weather-beaten) expression of countenance, she was a throughly benevolent woman. An important event was pending which demanded all her energies. It was a question of religion, a question of domestic policy, and a question of pecuniary interest. The gentleman who had long ministered in the chapel of ease was about to withdraw, overwhelmed, it was said, by the attentions of his pious hearers, and utterly unable to select a partner for life where so many candidates offered themselves, or were offered, for his acceptance. It was, therefore, necessary that a new minister should be chosen. A person was advertised for, and many gentlemen offered themselves to fill the vacant post. The Admiral found herself in a difficult position. If she chose an ultra Evangelical, she was sure to get into collision with the bishop, for the Episcopal Bench then, as now, was proclaimed to be 'a sad hinderance to the Word of God in the English Church.' If she chose a married man, the Free Church would attract many of the ladies, and lessen the value of the pew rents; a High Churchman was not on any account to be thought of. At last all was arranged to her satisfaction. The minister retired after a parting sermon, during which he and his congregation wept abundantly.

Soon after he married an heiress, and let us hope the lady of his choice. The new curate arrived. He had been a fellow of —— College, Oxford, and had passed through the ordeal unscathed; talked of Pusey as a well-meaning man of rather poor mental calibre, read a great deal of German, shook his head when asked about Newman, who had not then been deified by both parties, and had Dr. Colenso's views been popular at that day, would probably have advocated them mildly, preached clever sermons which defied the 'Admiral's' not very acute intellect, saw his position at a glance—and accepted it.

The new curate was a man of more than ordinary talent. He was also a thorough man of the world, and this combination of qualities helped him through many difficulties. The Admiral for the first time found she had a person to deal with who, while he treated her with courteous and marked respect, kept his own place, and obliged her to keep hers. The congregation, though apprehensive that he did not preach the Gospel 'in all its fulness,' were somewhat awed by his quiet assumption of superiority, and seemed to apprehend that they had at last found a teacher whom it might not be wise to criticise.

Soon after this gentleman arrived, a confirmation was announced, and he assembled a class for instruction twice a week. The class met in the chapel. It was open to all. I attended the lectures as regularly

as my health permitted, and for the first time the idea of a Church, of a visible Church, which had authority to teach was brought before me. Until then I had held the Evangelical view, and believed in a sort of general Church, composed of all who 'believed in Christ,' not caring to inquire very accurately what believing in Christ meant—of all who held 'essentials;' though I had no idea what doctrines were, and what were not, included under this head. I never thought about the Roman Catholic religion, or even adverted to it in the least. I had a vague general idea that Roman Catholics were idolators, that it was a sort of fallen Church. High Churchmen had not then commenced to fall foul of the Reformers and the Reformation; on the contrary, the former were held up as models of every virtue.

About this time also a friend lent me some of Dr. Pusey's sermons, and I may truly say that for months they were my constant companions. What the instructions of the new curate did for my intellect, Dr. Pusey's sermons did for my heart. The tone of tenderness soothed a very weary spirit; the practical suggestions showed there was yet work to be done even by the broken-hearted and the desolate; the doctrinal practices suggested were such as needed only to be tried to prove their efficacy. I was rapidly and unconsciously being educated into Puseyism. The successor of the unfortunate young man who had fallen a victim to his devotion to the surplice was now our

parish clergyman. I became acquainted with him, and by his advice left the chapel of ease, which he considered little better than a Dissenting meeting-house, and gave up my connection with the Bible Society, which brought a torrent of reproaches from the Admiral on my devoted head.

The chapel-of-ease clergyman paid me an admonitory visit; said, that as he knew I had learned Church principles from him, he felt it his duty to caution me not to go 'too far,' though he by no means indicated the Rubicon which he feared. Soon after he married a lady of very large property, and, being no longer dependent on his ministerial labours for support, he resigned his position, and was succeeded by a thorough Evangelical. It was now rumoured that our rector was quite willing to hear confessions if he could find penitents, and that he had 'some idea' of establishing a Sisterhood. He was, however, as cautious as his predecessor had been precipitate; and though he established an eight o'clock Communion service on Sundays and Thursdays, had daily prayers, insisted on pouring water on the infants brought to him for baptism, to the extreme annoyance of their mothers and nurses, still he was most careful both in conversation and in the pulpit to avoid giving the least expression to doctrinal opinions.

A family now came to reside near us, with whom I

became very intimate. Lord and Lady Brownleigh were both in delicate health—the latter was, in fact, more of an invalid than I was. We drove out together frequently, and from her I learned much of the habits and customs of the High Church party. She had all the little books of doctrine, which at that time had been 'adapted' from 'foreign sources;' all the little wonderful compilations about 'How to prepare for a First Confession,' 'Prayers for the Penitential Seasons,' 'Devotions for the Holy Eucharist,' 'Hours for the Use of Members of the English Church,' which were 'privately printed,' and handed, with a thousand injunctions to secrecy, from one to another of the initiated. What a change has been made in twenty years, when confession is practised openly, and Catholic books of doctrine, no longer 'adapted,' are sold and printed, under new titles it may be, but without alteration, and by Protestant publishers.

I had also another friend, Miss King, who was an advanced 'Puseyite.' She went to confession, said 'Hours,' fasted, and talked of ending her life in a Sisterhood.

I now began to wish for a confessor myself. There was a hardness and coldness about our rector which made me shrink from the very idea of mentioning the subject to him; and I doubt if there was another clergyman in the diocese who would have heard

a confession even had he been asked. Yet the majority were comparatively High Church in their views, or at least moderately so.

My difficulty was solved sooner than I expected. Lady Brownleigh told me one day that a clergyman of whom she had often spoken to me was coming to spend a day with her—he was, in fact, going on a confessional tour, for there were at that time few indeed who would hear a confession; hence those who desired the ceremony attained their object under many difficulties. I had often heard of Dr. Smithson, and knew that he was peculiarly kind to all who suffered either in body or mind. I at once accepted the offer. Poor Lady Brownleigh looked on me with sad envy, if one so gentle could envy. She, too, longed for the 'privilege' which she was obtaining for me; but Dr. Smithson would not hear the confession of any married lady unless she obtained the consent of her husband, although it never occurred to him to ask the consent of a bishop.

Lord Brownleigh, though a very advanced Churchman himself, and most anxious, and conscientiously anxious, to afford me every facility for my purpose, would not hear of his wife's following my example. Poor Lady Brownleigh; it was a heavy trial, and she bore it as she bore all else, with a touching, uncomplaining patience.

CHAPTER II.

ARRANGEMENTS TO ENTER A SISTERHOOD—I SELECT MISS LANGDON'S IN PREFERENCE TO MISS JONES'S—MY RECEPTION AT THE SISTERHOOD—A PROTESTANT 'RETREAT'—SOME ACCOUNT OF THE SISTERS AND THE SCHOOL—THE RULE, AND HOW IT WAS ADAPTED FROM THE RULE OF THE CATHOLIC SISTERS OF MERCY FOR OUR USE—IT WAS FURTHER ADAPTED FOR THE BISHOP—ANGLICAN SISTERS SAY 'OFFICE' TWICE OVER—EXPLANATION OF THE OFFICE.

WHEN I had quite decided on seeing Dr. Smithson, it occurred to me, why I cannot tell now, and probably could not have told at the time, that I ought to consult Mr. W——, our rector, before taking this important step. I had not mentioned the matter to any of my own family, nor did I intend to do so. They were sufficiently indignant at my having forsaken the chapel of Ease, at my attending daily service in the parish church, and at other practices of devotion which I could not entirely conceal. I must have had a vague idea in my mind that there was some interference with the rector's spiritual rights in this intrusion of Dr. Smithson into his office. Certainly Dr. Smithson had no scruples on the subject. He heard confession wherever he could find a penitent, and this, I believe, in opposition to the expressed wish of many bishops.

I saw the rector in the vestry after morning prayers.

He did not attempt to deter me from my purpose, but said in a very marked manner, which I perfectly understood, 'You know what the Exhortation directs. You can come to ME' (he paused) 'or to any other discreet minister of God's word.' I took no notice of the remark. As I have said, the rector was a cold and stern man, and I had no fancy for 'opening my griefs' to him. The truth was that I had not the least idea of confession being anything more than 'a comfort to burdened souls.' I had been taught to believe, and did believe, there were only two Sacraments in the Protestant Church, and those Sacraments were to me, as to all at that time, with few exceptions, a mere outward sign; a ceremony good in some way for the soul, but in what way I never asked either myself or others.

The day at last arrived, so much dreaded and yet so much desired. I was introduced to Dr. Smithson by Lady Brownleigh, who then immediately withdrew. The clergyman was well accustomed to such interviews, and therefore manifested no embarrassment. His gentle and friendly manner at once removed any that I had felt. He asked some kind questions about my health, about the cause of the deep mourning which I wore and intended to wear always. I told him of my wish to be a Sister of Mercy, of which he approved; and then asked very gently would I kneel beside him and commence my Confession.

It was a strange place for such a scene—a fashion-

ably furnished drawing-room—and poor Dr. Smithson seemed to feel the incongruity of the proceeding. He sighed frequently; indeed, he had a habit of sighing, or rather of uttering a sort of plaintive murmur, and taking a little devotional picture from a book which he had with him, he placed it before me.

After the confession I withdrew. Dr. Smithson dined with Lord and Lady Brownleigh, but I declined to appear at table. There seemed so much that was personal about all this, and so little that was sacramental; but how could it be otherwise? The English Church, in as far as it had sanctioned Confession by giving a form of Absolution for the Sick, had carefully excluded it from the Sacraments, and enjoined it to be used only in rare cases, and as a 'comfort.' It was a 'comfort' to me at the time, but it was nothing more.

Many ardent and fervent souls were beginning to feel the need of advice as well as comfort, of the need of some help in the new life to which they aspired; and thus it was that many who could not find it otherwise, sought it in this religious ceremony. It is true it had been absolutely and openly condemned by more than one bishop, and probably there were not two Anglican bishops at the time who would have sanctioned it. But although the great plea of the so-called High Church clergy was their desire to uphold the Church, by some extraordinary infatuation, they seemed to think that the advice or opinion of the bishops of their Church

was a matter of very little moment—the last thing to be considered.

In a few months after my first interview with Dr. Smithson I became a member of a Protestant Sisterhood. Several institutions of the kind were then in existence. The two principal ones had been several years founded. I had heard a good deal of both. The Superior of the one which I selected was an elderly lady, a Miss Langdon; the other establishment was under the care of a young lady—a Miss Jones. Miss Jones's establishment had obtained an unenviable notoriety. It was said that the lady was by no means displeased thereat, and courted popularity even if its verdict was not always complimentary. I knew nothing then of the merits or demerits of the case. I saw at once that Dr. Smithson preferred Miss Jones's house, and considered it a great sign of perfection if anyone expressed herself willing to face its unknown perils; in fact, he esteemed it a 'higher life,' and plainly said so. I chose the lower, feeling that I was far too much broken down, both physically and mentally, to endure the real or supposed martyrdoms of Miss Jones's establishment.

I wrote to Miss Langdon expressing my wish to enter her Sisterhood, and saying that I had Dr. Smithson's sanction, that gentleman being the 'spiritual

* See Note A.

superintendent' of the house; the bishop of the diocese, poor man, not being sufficiently advanced for such a charge. In fact, the bishops generally were supposed to be very unfit for these important offices. I may add that Dr. Smithson did not belong to the diocese in which the Sisterhood was established; but when pressed on the subject, he said that he had 'a —— well, a sort of sanction' from the bishop. How this plan worked will be seen presently.

Neither did Dr. Smithson belong to the diocese in which Miss Jones's establishment existed. But Miss Jones was sole *gouvernante* of her own house, and thereby saved herself not a little trouble. Besides, Dr. Smithson was often heard to regret deeply that Miss Jones was not a bishop, for which office he considered she had every qualification, so that perhaps she was quite able to be her own bishop, and his also.

I was received at the Sisterhood with the warmest welcome. The Sisters were all much attached to their 'spiritual director,' and anyone who 'belonged to him' was sure of a kind reception. I had at the time no idea whatever of what is technically called the religious life; I simply wished to devote myself to the service of God's poor. Even as a child a deep, and as it proved a lasting, impression had been made on me by a sermon which I heard preached by an Evangelical clergyman on visiting the fatherless and widows in their affliction. From childhood I had devoted

myself, as far as I could, to the poor; but it was one thing to do this in my spare half hours in the world, and another thing to give all my time to it in a Sisterhood.

The Sisters at that time rented two houses in the same street. One was occupied by the orphanage with the Sisters in charge, the other by the remaining members. A magnificent building was in course of erection, and it was even then said that Miss Jones was a little envious of our prosperity.

I arrived at Helston Street, after a long and weary journey, late on a summer's evening. I was shown at once to a small room neatly furnished, but without carpets or other conveniences of the kind. In a few moments Miss Langdon entered the little room, and one glance at her kind, benevolent face assured me I had found a friend. From that moment to the present hour my love and regard for her have never lessened. She remained with me only a few moments; and soon after another lady came in, an intellectual but very delicate-looking woman. Her manner seemed constrained, and indeed so did Miss Langdon's. Each Sister whom I met afterwards seemed to have the same constraint of manner; but, as I have said, my own heart was too much broken down by desolating sorrow to care much for cheerfulness or freedom; in truth, I rather preferred constraint and gloom. It was a most unhealthy state of mind for a girl of twenty;

but no one appeared to consider it so, or even to suggest that it should be otherwise.

I remained in this small room for ten days or a fortnight, only leaving it to attend 'prayers' in the neighbouring church. I was told afterwards that I had been in 'retreat;' and when, later on, I came to know what a Catholic retreat really was, I could not but smile at the idea. I was simply left to reflect on four walls and my own thoughts, a method of meditation not exactly contemplated by St. Ignatius Loyola. But it was before Catholic practices had been fully learnt by Protestant clergymen, and probably they manage these things differently now.

The daily routine of the Sisterhood was regular, simple, and easily observed. I did not rise at the usual hour, my health being so delicate, and Dr. Smithson, though accused again and again, both in public and private, of harshness towards his 'penitents,' was a man of most thoughtful tenderness, and full of consideration for others. Later, when we came completely under Miss Jones's rule, his character altered, as much as such a character could alter, and the change was proportionally painful to those who had admired and benefited by his former kindness. Nevertheless, even this could not lessen our regard for him, and few were more highly esteemed by all who knew him. The Sisters rose at five o'clock, or at least were supposed to do so, for several were unable as well as myself.

The service called *Lauds* was then said in the Oratory, a small apartment fitted up for devotional purposes.

At a quarter to seven o'clock, the orphans and Sisters assembled in the same room, and Prime was said. I shall give an explanation of these services later on, for the benefit of those who may not understand the technical terms. Breakfast followed, which was taken in silence; indeed, silence was observed all day, except at the hours appointed for recreation. After that meal we said Tierce, and went to hear morning prayers read in the church—a strange anomaly of which more hereafter. The Sisters who taught in the poor school went then to their duties, and the Sisters who had charge of the orphans to theirs. I was sent to the out school, and accompanied by a very tall, angular, good-natured, uneducated Scotch lady, who thrashed the boys (I mean it literally), scolded the girls, and yet ever showed herself to me most kind and gentle in word and manner.

The poor children were taken to church also. After prayers, on their return to the schoolroom, they were provided with a good meal of rice and milk. In order to ensure their exterior attention to the service, which very few of them were old enough to understand, a rule was made that every child who misbehaved should get no sugar. The rule worked admirably.

The school lasted until twelve, when we returned home, and said Sext. We had dinner at twenty

minutes after one, still in silence: the food was plain, good, and sufficient. After dinner we talked together in the 'common room,' or what in a convent would be called the community room. At three we said None. The Sisters appointed to attend the school, if I remember correctly, omitted the service altogether. The school was dismissed for the day at half-past four. At five there were three-quarters of an hour for spiritual reading, then Vespers. Supper followed at six, and after it a few moments' recreation. We then prepared for church, and those who could not go, after the fatigues of the day, read the service at home. On our return from church, at eight o'clock Compline was said, and the Sisters remained in the oratory after its conclusion for private devotion till twenty minutes past nine, when Matins was said. At ten all were supposed to be in bed.

This order of time worked very well, and was observed with the utmost regularity. It is, indeed, self-evident, that when a number of persons live together, there must be special hours appointed for special purposes. Even in domestic life every head of a family appoints certain times for meals, by which the occupations of the remaining hours of the day are more or less regulated. Some of my readers may know by experience how great is the wrath of a *paterfamilias* who finds his dinner a few moments too late, or hears the breakfast bell ten minutes too early.

If punctual attention to domestic arrangements tends not a little to preserve the peace of the family, how much greater the need for regulations, and punctual attention to them, where a number of persons of various habits and nationalities are assembled for a common purpose.

In the Rule, the Hours, as they are called in Catholic prayer books, were not marked by their Catholic titles. Tierce was called the Third Hour; Sext, the Sixth Hour; None, the Ninth Hour. There was a reason for this which I shall explain presently.

I must, however, remark that we were, unconsciously to ourselves, doing double duty in the way of prayers. At the Reformation the whole Catholic Liturgy was abolished by Act of Parliament, and certain services substituted for the offices then in use. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was abolished, and condemned in express terms as idolatrous, and the Communion Service put in its place; especial instructions being given that no adoration should be offered to the Sacrament. The offices, or Hours, which the Catholic priests and religious had said from the earliest ages were also condemned, and the morning and evening prayers as they now stand in the Book of Common Prayer were *substituted* for them. These Catholic Hours, or offices, were seven in number, and their object was to emulate on earth the continual praise of Heaven. Matins and Lauds were the longest of these services, and were

generally said continuously, and commenced at midnight. Matins began with the *Creed, Pater Noster*, and *Ave Maria*; then followed the *Domine libera*, &c., and the Psalm *Venite*. After this certain Psalms appointed for each day were recited, and then followed the lessons from Scripture and the 'Lives of the Saints.'

As a Protestant, I had always been under the impression that the 'Breviary,' or book containing these devotions, was full of wicked and terrible stories. I did not know that it was all, or nearly all, Scripture; that for one page containing the life of a saint, there were fifty pages of the Bible. In fact, I had always believed, as most Protestants do believe, that priests and monks were very wicked people, and liked this wicked book, and would not read the Bible. I had never seen a Breviary, but took all this on trust; and I was much surprised when assured at the Sisterhood that the 'offices,' or 'Hours,' they said daily were translated faithfully from this terrible book, the 'Lives of Saints,' which formed a very small portion of it, being omitted for the present.

There was another omission also. In the Catholic Breviary, at the end of each of these Hours, there is a short prayer for the faithful departed. This was omitted from our books, but we made a pause, and said the prayer mentally. The reason of this was not explained to me for some time after. The bishop of the diocese strongly disapproved of prayers for the dead, and

Dr. Smithson, the 'spiritual superintendent,' said it was not respectful to say the prayers aloud, as the bishop did not approve of it. It was undoubtedly a very beautiful method of obeying our prelates, and very instructive and suggestive for those who at the same time were making *vows* of obedience to Dr. Smithson.

But I have not yet quite explained how we did double duty in prayers. Mass of course we had not, and 'high and low celebrations' were still looming in the misty future. But we said Matins at night in the Sisterhood, and in the morning we went to church, and said Matins at Church. In fact, the morning prayer is termed Matins in the Book of Common Prayer, and is made up from the Catholic service which bears that name. The Reformers of course left out the *Ave Maria*, and shortened the Psalms, taking a month to get through the Psalter, which is said once in the week by Catholic priests. But the morning service commences with the *Venite*, 'O come let us sing unto the Lord,' &c. The Psalms follow in both services. Thus we said Matins in the original Catholic form at home at night, and Matins in the 'adapted' Protestant form at church in the morning. In the evening we said Catholic Vespers and Compline at home, and Protestant Vespers and Compline at church. To such curious anomalies are people driven when they are fain, as Carlyle quaintly observes, to be Protestants without liberty, Catholics without Popery, and Papists without a Pope.

All religious Orders have what is called a Rule. This is one of the most important and essential matters in the religious life. A State must have a Constitution. Each State has its own Constitution. This Constitution has generally been the result of the thought of a master mind in its basis, though subsequently modified by various minds, to suit circumstances as they have arisen. Thus the Rules of religious Orders have been in the main composed, or compiled, by the founders of these Orders, and occasionally modified by others, as the circumstances of time or place might require.

The most ancient Rules are those of St. Augustine and St. Benedict, and many modern Rules are more or less entirely founded on them. Besides the Rules, or rather as a part of them, there are what are termed Constitutions, which are, as it were, the laws of the Order in regard to exterior things. In fact, the word Constitutions almost explains itself.

The importance of Rules and Constitutions cannot be overrated. A Catholic monk or nun, in making vows, binds himself or herself to their observance. They have read and studied them carefully. They know they cannot be altered or modified at the caprice of any individual. They know that they have had the sanction of the Holy See, and the mature consideration of the most learned theologians. For it need scarcely be said that in the Catholic Church no man or woman could set up a religious order, or give rules to any who wished to

unite in any good work, without first the sanction, full and clear, of the bishop of the diocese, and finally the sanction, full and clear, of the Holy See.

Dr. Smithson, however, and those clergymen who co-operated with him in the foundation of the Sisterhood, were in the unpleasant position of not having the clear and express sanction of any bishop, much less of the Archbishop of Canterbury, or of Her Majesty as the head of their Church.

I never could clearly and fully ascertain where our Rule was procured. I was informed, on what seemed credible authority, that Dr. Smithson had gone to Ireland, as the fountain-head of Catholic information, and obtained a copy of the Rules of the Sisters of Mercy from their foundress, Mrs. McAulay. I wrote, a few years ago, to Miss Langdon, who should have been thoroughly informed on this subject, to ask for correct details. She replied thus:—

'Our Rule was, most strictly speaking, a compilation from the Nuns of the Visitation, founded by St. Francis de Sales. For the most part it was taken, word for word, from the authorised English translation. I had the whole for years in French. Our Rule was the original Rule and Spiritual Directory *messed* together. The Constitutions were left out entirely. We afterwards, with much thought and pains, modified Constitutions from these, with some trifling alterations, to meet our external work; but —— rejected them en-

tirely, because they contained a proviso for an appeal to the bishop of the diocese, in case the Spiritual Father and the Superior could not agree on any point or matter of importance. The Rule which related to visiting the sick and poor —— might have obtained from the Sisters at Dublin, as you say, but I never heard that he did. I could not tell where it came from.'

The fact is, that the Rule of the Catholic Sisters of Mercy coincides almost verbally with that given by Dr. Smithson to us. I have compared many chapters, and I think the comparison will be interesting to my readers. It was well known that, before establishing his Sisterhood, he went to Ireland to visit the convents; and it is generally believed that he obtained a copy of the Rule of the Sisters of Mercy from Mrs. McAulay. I have placed the extracts below, after comparing the written Rule of the Protestant Sisters, now in my possession, with the printed Rule of the Catholic Sisters.*

* See Note B for some particulars about the Rule of the Visitation Order.

CHAPTER I.

CATHOLIC RULE. PROTESTANT ADAPTATION.

Of the Object of the Institute.

The Sisters admitted to this religious congregation, besides the principal and general end of all religious Orders, which is attending particularly to their own perfection, must also have in view what is particularly characteristic of this Institute of the Sisters of Mercy—that is, a most constant application to the instruction of poor girls, visitation of the sick, and protection of distressed women of good character.

The main object of this Institute is to afford opportunities to persons apart from the world and its distractions, to perfect holiness in the fear of God, and to grow in the love of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, especially by cherishing and showing forth love to Him in His poor and afflicted members.

Of the School.

Before the Sisters enter school, they shall raise their hearts to God, and to the Queen of Heaven, recommending themselves and the children to their care and protection.

Before ye enter the school, raise your hearts to God, recommending to His protection yourselves and the children committed to your care.

The Sisters shall teach the children to offer their hearts to God when they awake in the morning, adore His Sovereign Majesty, return thanks for all His favours, and arm themselves with the

Besides the ordinary instruction, ye shall teach the children to offer their hearts to God when they awake in the morning, and in all the actions of the day to adore His Sovereign Majesty, and

sign of the Cross. They shall instruct them how to direct all their thoughts, words, and actions to God's glory; to implore His grace to know and love Him, and to fulfil His commandments; how to examine their conscience, and to honour and respect parents and superiors.

They shall teach them the method of assisting devoutly at the Holy Sacrifice of Mass; how to prepare for confession; and be ever attentive to dispose them for the Sacrament of Confirmation, and for Holy Communion.

return Him thanks for all His mercies; instruct them to direct all their thoughts, words, and actions to the glory of God; to realise His presence everywhere; to implore His grace that they may know and love Him, and keep His commandments, and to respect their parents and superiors.

Ye shall bestow much pains in preparing the children for the Holy Ordinance of Confirmation, as making them yet further temples of the Holy Ghost; and for the Holy Eucharist, as the means of intimate union with their Saviour, through the gift of Himself, His Body, and Blood to them.

As there are no disputes in the Catholic Church about its Articles of Faith, explanations such as those given in the Protestant Rule about confirmation, hinting that it was something more than the mere form which Protestants usually consider it, and concerning the Holy Eucharist, intimating that there was something more therein than the vast majority of Anglican bishops and clergymen had ever discerned, were obviously unnecessary.

The chapter of the Rule on the Admission of Distressed Women is also very similar.

Of the Admission of Distressed Women.

Distressed women of good character admitted to the House of Mercy shall, if necessary, be instructed in the principal mysteries of religion, and required to comply with their religious obligations. They shall be induced to repair as much as possible their past neglect, by piously preparing to approach the Holy Sacrament, and conforming their will to the regular discharge of the duties of the state in which God has placed them.

Distressed women of good character admitted to the Institute shall be instructed, if necessary, in the principal mysteries of religion, and in their duties to God and man.

Care shall be taken to place them in situations for which they are adapted, in order that they may continue such length of time in them as shall secure for them a character, upon having which their future support may depend. Many leave their situations not so much for want of merit, as incapacity to fulfil the duties they seriously engage in. They shall not be encouraged to remain long in the house, as it will generally be found more conducive to their good to enter soon into the state and employment by which they are to live.

Employment shall be provided for them proportionate to their abilities, and they shall be allowed to continue in it long enough to establish a character for good conduct, upon which their future support must depend.

They shall not be encouraged to remain long in the Institute, since in most cases it will be better for them to enter soon upon the state and employment by which they are to gain a livelihood.

Although it should always be considered a general rule to ask for the necessary testimonials, and particularly that of the parish priest, as to character and distress, yet there may be some who have a strong claim for protection, although they cannot procure them. But even with respect to these last, let the parish priest be always consulted, in order that their qualities may be better known for the guidance of Superiors. The daughters of reduced tradesmen, who have not been practically instructed in religion, or known beyond their parents' home, may be admitted on the recommendation of a pious and prudent woman who has lived some years in the neighbourhood; and they should be allowed to remain in the house until practised in servitude, or entitled to a character from the congregation.

Although, as a general rule, no applicant shall be admitted but such as can produce testimonials to their previous good conduct and purity, and these testimonials should come, if possible, from the parish priest, there may be cases, nevertheless, of such who deserve to have favour shown them, even if they have no testimonials to produce. Concerning this, however, the parish priest shall in all cases be consulted, that their qualifications, by which the judgment of the Superior is to be determined, may be better known. With this precaution, the daughters of reduced tradesmen, who have not been instructed in the practical parts of their religion, and who are not known beyond their immediate neighbourhood, may be admitted on good recommendation; and they may be allowed to remain in the house until they have learned the duties of a servant, and have established a claim to a recommendation from the Institute.

The Rule entitled Of Visiting the Sick is verbally the same. One paragraph, however, in the Catholic Rule

was necessarily omitted from the Protestant adaptation. It speaks of our Divine Lord's remarkable tenderness for the sick, by far the greater number of His miracles having been performed for the healing of bodily infirmities; and there is a brief mention of some of the saints who followed His most blessed example, devoted their lives to suffering humanity, and in His name performed miracles of healing also. The necessity of this omission is sufficiently obvious.

Thus the Rule was doctored for the benefit of the Sisters; but it had to go through another course of doctoring for the benefit of the bishop, who was supposed to be by no means so advanced, or so enlightened, as might have been expected from the responsible and grave charge which he held.

The Sisterhood was founded in the year 1845. The Catholic Rule, adapted and Protestantised sufficiently for *the Sisters*, was read by them daily, and they lived in hope that soon they might have Constitutions. After they had been established about four years, the bishop of the diocese, very naturally and very properly, wished to know something of their Rule. He applied to the clergyman whose church they attended, as Dr. Smithson, their founder and director, did not belong to his diocese.

His lordship little knew the consternation he caused. On Maunday Thursday (I can never forget it) Mr. —— entered and summoned me to the Oratory. It

was the first great shock in what had been till then a most happy dream. He went up to the altar, and took away the beautifully bound copy of our Rule which lay thereon, saying, 'This Rule must be altered before it is read again in the Oratory; it will not do to read it in its present form.' I had heard nothing of the bishop's application then, but imagined the difficulties emanated from Mr. ——, who was our temporal superintendent, and had taken little or no cognisance of our spiritual affairs. We were in sorrowful consternation until the next day, till —— appeared; but he did not comfort us much. He went through the Rules with us, striking out different passages, altering others, and suppressing the Rule headed Confession altogether. The objectionable passages were such as implied that we were the spouses of our Lord; were completely separated from the world, &c. When he observed our great grief, and had to meet my warm remonstrances, he told us that we knew the Rule well by this time, and could always keep in mind, when it was read, the parts omitted, and that he had no idea of our giving up confession, although it must not appear in the Rule. In fact, the bishop was completely taken in.

CHAPTER III.

VOWS MADE WITHOUT THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE BISHOP—EXTRAORDINARY FASTS SANCTIONED—DEATH OF A SISTER FROM FASTING—EXTREME UNCTION ADMINISTERED TO HER BY A PROTESTANT BISHOP—KINDNESS OF THE SISTERS TO EACH OTHER—DEBATES ABOUT GOING TO COMMUNION ON GOOD FRIDAY—A TROUBLESOME POSTULANT—A PAIR OF SHOES AND A VOCATION—A LADY WISHING TO ABSTAIN FROM FOOD ENTIRELY, AND LIVE ON THE BREAD AND WINE OF THE PROTESTANT COMMUNION.

WE have now seen how the Rule, having been Protestantised sufficiently for the Sisters, was further Protestantised sufficiently for the bishop. I should, however, add, that vows were made by some of the Sisters, and received by Dr. Smithson. This, of course, was kept from the bishop's knowledge also.

The difference in the motives and intentions of those who joined the Sisterhood would perhaps be scarcely believed or understood by the general reader. A very few were what would now be called advanced Anglicans, and would term themselves 'Catholics.' They made vows in private to Dr. Smithson; but the greatest secrecy was observed in this matter, and it was kept most carefully from the knowledge of the bishop, the person who ought to have been first acquainted with it, if those who received the vows had acted on their own principles. They were constantly preaching up the

Church, and submission to the Church, and as constantly defying their bishops, acting against their wishes, not openly and honourably—a course which might have merited self-respect as well as the respect of others—but with, I had almost said, mean secrecy.

The Sisters for the most part were not aware of this. Of course we all knew that our bishop did not quite approve of Sisterhoods, that he would probably have openly condemned vows had he known they were made, but we rarely adverted to such thoughts. Women are seldom close reasoners. We came to the Sisterhood, as I believe, from the best and purest motives; from the same motives we remained. We had unlimited faith and trust in our Spiritual Director; he knew the merits of the case fully, and I cannot, I grieve to say, quite exonerate him. Such a line of conduct, if carried out in the Catholic Church, would have been termed Jesuitical by Protestants.

This attempt to introduce Catholic practices into a Protestant church led to other inconveniences, to use a gentle expression, besides the necessity for subterfuges. I have already said that Dr. Smithson had been accused falsely of harshness to his penitents; whereas the penitents, on the contrary, were harsh to themselves. When a Catholic reaction commenced, there was no limit to the zeal, and, shall I say, to the imprudence of the neophyte: Catholic fasting was by no means sufficiently austere, Catholic obedience by no means sufficiently strict. The

young Puseyite—for what other term can I give him?—commenced by condemning his own Church, even while he professed to exalt it, and ended by condemning the Catholic Church, even while he found in it his model for imitation. A painful instance of this occurred shortly before I entered the Sisterhood. It had increased the gloom and restraint, which I at once noticed as the prevailing characteristic.

A Miss O—— had joined the Community about a year after its commencement. She came to the Sisterhood in delicate health, yet insisted on fasting during the Lent in the most rigid manner. The Superioress represented the matter to Dr. Smithson, as she had represented many such other matters before; but in vain. Her authority was merely nominal; and although I have said that Dr. Smithson was upbraided unjustly with harshness, still he was undoubtedly the cause of much serious ill health among his penitents. Although he never required the extension of austerities, he certainly sanctioned them and morally encouraged them. Miss O——'s was a case in point. The most robust female would soon have succumbed to such macerations as she practised, and she was anything but robust.

During Lent she fasted on one meal daily, which consisted merely of thick oatmeal porridge, and was not taken until nine o'clock in the evening. The second Lent Miss O—— commenced the same practice. The

Superioress expostulated with her, but in vain; and Miss Langdon felt that it was hopeless to apply to Dr. Smithson, as he was sure to sanction any austerities his penitents might fancy. About ten days after Easter, Miss O—— manifested symptoms of gastric fever. She never rose from her bed again; and when her brother came to see his dying sister, indignant and angry at the manifest cause of her death, Dr. Smithson quietly blamed the unfortunate Superioress, whose authority he had always steadily overruled on such matters, and indeed on many others.

Miss O—— had never the least doubt concerning her own Church, but in her dying moments she expressed a wish to receive extreme unction. It was strange at a time when Catholic practices had been but newly introduced into the Protestant Church. But her desire was something very much stronger than a mere wish. She declared that she could not die in peace unless her request was granted. The Doctor was in a difficult and delicate position; but help was at hand. A very High Church bishop happened to be in Helston at the time—possibly the only bishop who would, or ever did, attempt such a ceremony. He complied with the wish of the dying lady, and administered to her some kind of Protestant imitation of the Catholic Sacrament. Dr. Smithson approved of the arrangement, but was not present while the ceremony was performed.

Another Sister also, to my own knowledge, fell a victim to the practice of excessive austerities. Miss E—— was the daughter of a clergyman of 'moderate' views, rather inclining to High Church. When I entered the Sisterhood her health was extremely delicate. In a few months she manifested symptoms of decline. She assured me herself, again and again, that she believed her illness had been caused by fasting; and she also died soon after. But let us not blame these victims of mistaken zeal. At least they sacrificed their young lives for what they believed to be a good and holy cause; and how many lives are sacrificed, year by year, to the requirements of fashion, and the miserable frivolities of society.

In truth, our strong members were few, and I think only three really could be said to 'enjoy' good health. Miss Langdon was naturally of a very strong constitution. She never spared herself, worked harder than anyone else, and fasted according to the Rules of the Catholic Church as far as she could ascertain what they were. This was, indeed, one of our great difficulties, for the Protestant Prayer Book simply mentioned certain days as days of fasting and abstinence. Now fasting and abstinence are different things, and there was no authority to decide which was meant on any particular day, or what was excluded under the head of abstinence. The bishop, of course, would have been the proper person to apply to; he should have made the necessary regulations for his diocese, and given the

necessary dispensations. But the bishop happened, unfortunately, to be the last person to whom we would have mentioned such a subject. Dr. Smithson, however, appeared to find no difficulty either in giving dispensations or deciding cases of conscience, on his own sole responsibility. He was, in fact, our Pope, and he accepted the position.

One of the Sisters was possessed of remarkable strength. On one occasion, when the Sisters were returning from church, she saw a poor man, of more than ordinary height and size, fall in the street, and in a moment she had seized him, lifted him bodily off the ground, and set him on his legs. Once also I had the benefit of her kindness and her strength, for which I ever felt grateful. During an unusually hard winter, I fainted suddenly one morning while we were all assembled at breakfast. When consciousness returned, I found myself in dear A——'s arms, and knew that she had carried me, while in a state of perfect insensibility, down a long refectory, through a stone corridor of some extent, and finally up a large high flight of stairs. How she performed such an exploit was entirely beyond my comprehension. Miss T—— left the establishment after it came under Miss Jones's supervision, each lady having a tolerably equal horror of the other. I have not seen or heard anything of her for many years, but I believe she renounced Puseyism and became an Evangelical.

The third Sister notable for physical strength was equally generous in its use for the benefit of others.

She was entirely devoted to the care of the little orphans, and no mother could have tended her children with more anxious love. There was a baby, a real baby —I think only a year and a half old—among the number. She kept this little thing in a cot beside her at night, and fed her with milk warmed by a spirit lamp in summer, and the fire in winter. After a time we were asked to take another baby. Miss Langdon hesitated. She had no fancy for putting burdens on other people which she could not take herself; and she thought the Sister had quite enough to do. The case was a peculiar one. The poor mother was an 'unfortunate,' led astray by a gentleman who had promised her marriage. A home had been found for her in a penitentiary, but unless the baby was provided for she could not accept the offer. When Miss W—— heard of the case, she at once assured us that two babies would be quite as little trouble as one; in fact, she almost persuaded us and herself that the addition to her charge would lessen her burden. The baby was taken, and, with the true tenderness of Christian charity, cared for by this good Sister. It died in a few months, after several weeks' severe illness. The Sister could hardly be persuaded to leave it day or night, even for the most necessary rest; and I believe few mothers ever shed more burning tears over their departed little ones than those with which Miss W—— mourned the dying babe.

There was not much to be remembered or recorded in our peaceful life. Our duties were regular and regularly observed. Perhaps it was partly my state of mind which made me feel that there was an extreme sadness over every one and every thing. The most joyous festivals seemed even to increase this oppression. We wanted something, we pined after something, consciously or unconsciously.

> We looked before and after,
> And pinèd for what was not.

Dr. Smithson came at intervals of three or four months to hear our confessions, generally before Easter and Christmas. One Christmas I remember well. The clergyman whose church we attended proposed a great demonstration on Christmas night; in fact, what would now be termed a high celebration, *minus* vestments and incense. But then the sweet perfume of Romish incense had not begun to vex the shades of Latimer and Cranmer, nor did visions of Popish vestments on reformed Protestants haunt their tombs. A procession of boys and clergymen in white surplices, singing an English version of the *Adeste fideles*, evening prayers, and the communion service chanted cathedral fashion, commencing at half-past ten, concluding soon after midnight, was then thought a serious innovation; yet the Rev. Mr. —— attempted it. The church was decorated with exquisite taste, and I thought the service very attractive and beautiful. I remember we had

wonderful debates among ourselves, whether those who received communion at night should also receive it again next day. I did not, but I think the majority did. We were all in a somewhat similar predicament on Good Friday; and I think each recurrence of these seasons renewed the debate. I cannot imagine why we thought about it at all; my impression is that someone knew the practice of the Catholic Church in this matter, and therefore started the question.

Not long after my arrival, a lady presented herself for admission. It was very difficult at that time to get Sisters, and any addition was most welcome, for there was work enough for many. Miss H——, I believe, had very peculiar ideas of a Sisterhood. She was not young, had a very large fortune in her own right, and manifestly had mistaken her vocation. Her temper was by no means the most amiable, and we all heartily rejoiced when she took her departure. Her immediate cause of annoyance was a pair of shoes. Very absurd and very childish, some people will say, but, when explained, perhaps neither so absurd nor so childish as it seems at first sight.

When a number of persons live together, common sense will dictate that some individual must be placed in a position of authority over the rest, and that it is for the general and individual good to make such an arrangement. A regiment without officers would be a hindrance in the field, and a nuisance in barracks.

Furthermore, certain domestic duties, or the superintendence of certain domestic duties, must be delegated to some individual for the common good. Thus in our little society one had charge of the orphans, another of the poor school, another of dispensing simple medicines to the poor, and to the Sisters, or other inmates; another purchased and gave out to each the necessary articles of clothing. Miss H—— soon after her arrival required a pair of boots, and they were ordered for her. She had been accustomed, like most of us, to expensive and fashionable clothing, and though she willingly submitted to wear a plain black dress and cap, the strong roughly made boots we generally wore were too much for her. She threw them to the Sister, some think at her, in indignant passion, and used very warm language. It was probably the climax of a series of small griefs, and a few days after she left us.

Shortly before my arrival another lady had gone away under peculiar circumstances also. She had expressed a great desire for mortification, and insisted on extraordinary fasts. At last she asserted her intention of doing without food entirely, and living only on the bread and wine received at communion. Dr. Smithson was delighted with her zeal, and seemed to approve of the plan; but Miss Langdon protested so energetically that the point was yielded, and the lady left the house, one day while the Sisters were at dinner, without informing anyone of her intention.

CHAPTER IV.

WOMEN LIVING TOGETHER DO NOT NECESSARILY QUARREL—NO INSTRUCTION GIVEN OF ANY KIND TO THOSE WHO CAME TO BE SISTERS—BOOTS AND BONNETS—ANYTHING WHICH CAUSES SIN TO BE COMMITTED CANNOT BE CALLED TRIFLING—MISS JONES TRIES TO OBTAIN RULE OVER OUR SISTERHOOD—EXPLANATION OF THE DIFFERENT VIEWS OF THE RELIGIOUS LIFE IN OUR SISTERHOOD AND IN MISS JONES'S—DR. PUSEY'S OPINION—THE BISHOP OF OXFORD'S OPINION—WHAT CATHOLIC THEOLOGY TEACHES ON THE SUBJECT OF VOWS AND RELIGIOUS LIFE.

One of the most common and most untrue of the many popular prejudices against Sisterhoods is founded on the supposition that a number of women *cannot* live together without quarrelling with each other. It is said that sisters or families do not always agree well together, and it is argued naturally, though not very logically, that sisters in Sisterhoods must disagree. I speak from an experience of fifteen years, and emphatically deny the imputation. I never had a sister, but I think if I had I should have loved her very dearly; but I have known many families of sisters, and I cannot say that I ever saw or heard the amount of disagreement that is popularly laid to their charge. Even were disagreements in families so common, there are two solid reasons why they would not be so likely to exist in Sisterhoods. In the first place, and con-

sidering the matter from a mere worldly point of view, as strangers, they would be likely to be more courteous to each other. In the second place, it will surely be admitted that nothing but a strong religious feeling could induce anyone to relinquish the pleasures of life for the seclusion of the cloister; and surely the very first effects of such a feeling should be to teach kindness and charity towards those with whom we associate. The degree of this charity would be proportioned to the real religious earnestness and fervour of each individual. To suppose that there would not, or should not, be an occasional difference of opinion, or a momentary exhibition of petulance now and then, would be simply to suppose that the fact of becoming a Sister in itself freed one from all the temptations of the devil, and from all the evil inclinations of the will. St. Peter and St. Paul had a difference of opinion once which ended in a temporary separation; but we do not hear that it interfered in any way with their office as Apostles, or their real love for each other and for their work. It is one thing to have a brief dissension, and to be reconciled immediately. It is quite another matter to keep up malice for weeks or months.

We had our differences of opinion occasionally, but they were neither serious nor lasting. The elder Sister, who was considered, or rather considered herself, a person of some importance at the beginning, had thereby created a little feeling of dislike. But she saw

her error before her death, and deplored it to me more than once with touching humility. Her fault was rather in her manner than in her heart. The Sister who ranked next to her was naturally high-spirited, and often worked far beyond her strength; and she seemed to me from this and other causes scarcely to pay the deference which she should have done to Miss Langdon. But the office of Superior was so ill defined, and so purely nominal, that it was really hard to blame any one for a deficiency in obedience. No kind of instruction whatever was given to any one entering the Sisterhood, so each had her own theory about the religious life, and acted on it.

I never cared for needlework of any kind, though I am sorry to confess to such an unfeminine failing. Dear Miss E—— worked most beautifully, and soon after my arrival she gave me a bonnet to trim in the somewhat eccentric fashion in which we wore them. I was disgusted with the whole affair, and I suppose showed it in my manner. Miss E—— did not see it, I am sure, for she was not very observant of the feelings of others. But another Sister saw it, and I can even yet remember the sweet smile with which she came to me, and said, 'Let me do it for you, dear; I know how Sister —— likes them done.'

'From boots to bonnets,' some one will say. Allow me to ask in reply, are men never out of temper about collars and studs? These things are trifles, but their

results are not trifling. The sum of everyday life is composed of trifles. The most important discoveries have been made by observing trifles. Nothing can be called a trifle which either causes or prevents a sin.

We had our little domestic skeleton too—who has not?—and that skeleton was Miss Jones, a substantial one in her personal appearance, and a formidable one in her effects. I have already said that Dr. Smithson had a very high opinion of Miss Jones, and Miss Jones had very high ideas of her mission. She had come before the public a good deal, and apparently she did not shrink from such a course. It was said that she wished to have all the Protestant Sisterhoods under her entire control, and that she spared no efforts to accomplish her end. One of the Sisters belonging to our Establishment left it suddenly, and went to a Catholic priest, who gave her conditional baptism. It was a most unwise proceeding, and one deeply deplored afterwards. The lady was an impulsive, affectionate, and rather weak-minded person. This step had hardly been taken ere it was repented, and she returned to the Sisterhood at once. Her mind was, as may well be supposed, in a most miserable state. Dr. Smithson recommended Miss Jones, and the poor lady, clinging to any idea of help or comfort, at once consented to go to her. After she had remained a short time under that lady's care, if care it could be called, where she hardly saw any Sister, except her immediate attendants, oftener than

twice a year, her misery only increased, though she never attributed it to the real cause. Miss Jones then sent her back to us for a time, with the special mission, as she herself assured me, of winning us over to accept that lady as our Superior. The poor Sister, in a broken-hearted way, did all that was required of her. She talked constantly of 'dearest mother,' of her wonderful gifts, of her self-sacrifices, of her love for her spiritual children, and broadly hinted that Miss Langdon was utterly her inferior in every qualification—mental and spiritual.

The mission did not succeed. I had already, I admit, a prejudice against Miss Jones from all I had heard of her. The other Sisters, who knew her, positively disliked and dreaded her, and were thoroughly aware of her wish to possess herself of their establishment.

They complained to me that she was singularly unscrupulous in her proceedings, and would not hesitate at actions anything but straightforward to gain her end. They complained also of her haughtiness of manner and assumptions of superiority. On one occasion she had visited their Sisterhood soon after she established her own. They had known her before intimately, and naturally called her by her christian name when they addressed her. But they were soon informed of their error; with a dignity she could well assume she exclaimed, 'I am not —— now' (mentioning her christian name); 'you must call me the Lady Superior.' The

Sisters smiled; she might be the Lady Superior to those who put themselves under her guidance; she certainly was not, and they prayed she never might be, the Lady Superior to them.

The unhappy Sister returned without accomplishing her mission. But Miss Jones obtained her end in a manner as little anticipated by her as by us.

The Crimean war effected more changes in the destinies of individuals than in those of nations; at all events, it effected a marvellous change for many of us. Before entering on this subject, however, it will be necessary to explain more fully than I have yet done the views held by our party on the religious state.

I have already said that some of the Sisters, very few comparatively, had made vows of obedience to Dr. Smithson. What the views of the High Church party were at that time on the subject of the religious life, and of vows, may be easily gathered from the writings of their great leader, from whom they naturally received the distinctive name of Puseyites.

In the year 1851 he wrote thus to the Bishop of London:—

'I am not aware that I have anywhere advocated what are technically called "the counsels of perfection," and that because I have not myself been called to them. Having, while God permitted it, been married, I have not advocated celibacy.' 'I do not say this,' he continues, 'as implying that there are not "counsels" in

the Gospel, as well as "precepts." For our Lord Himself says, "All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given;" "He that is able to receive it, let him receive it;" leaving a choice therein; whereas there is no choice as to any command of God's. And St. Paul distinguishes on the same subject: "Concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord, yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful."'

But he goes further. 'The distinction, then, between "counsels" and "precepts" of the "Gospel" is given by our Lord Himself. I will not enter into the question, whether (as Dr. Hickes says that Fénelon explains the distinction) "counsels" become real "precepts" under the circumstances with respect to which they were given. One who is really and distinctly drawn by God to a more devoted life, as of holy orders, or a missionary, would certainly sin, if, through love of worldly ease, he held back from that drawing. What the consequence would be to him God alone knows. The frame of mind which so draws back might end in the final love of the world rather than of God, and so in the loss of God.'

Let us analyse this remarkable passage. Dr. Pusey first makes an assertion; he next gives a reason for his assertion. This assertion is simple: 'I have not anywhere advocated what are technically called the counsels of perfection.' I shall give some explanation later

of what the Catholic Church understands by this term. His obvious meaning is what are commonly called the Three Vows of the Religious Life—poverty, chastity, and obedience. On St. Peter's Day, in the year 1849, a friend of mine, then Superioress of a Sisterhood under Dr. Pusey's care, made those three vows to him. If that was not 'advocating' counsels of perfection, one must feel that language has been made rather to conceal one's thoughts than to explain them. This lady was only one of many who made similar vows. Dr. Pusey next gives a reason for not advocating the counsels of perfection. He says, because 'he had been married, he had not advocated celibacy.' It is difficult to know the meaning of the word advocate, if receiving vows to observe the counsels was not advocating them, if encouraging the establishment of Sisterhoods was not a very practical advocacy. But, granted that he did not advocate celibacy, the reason he gives for not doing so is surely a most singular one, and significant of the mistiness which seems to envelope many of Dr. Pusey's doctrinal writings. He argues forcibly in favour of such counsels. He says they are to be found in the Gospel; are advocated by St. Paul, and winds up with a statement that 'loss of God,' or, in plain words, eternal damnation, may be the penalty for not following them. Yet, because he did not follow them himself, he will not 'advocate' them. It is much as if a man who had lost a treasure should say, 'I have lost a treasure;

I know now I can never get it. You may, perhaps, but I shall not help you to gain it because I did not get it myself.' Happily for many, Dr. Pusey's heart was ever in advance of his head; and he did all that in him lay to gain for others the prize which, it is quite possible, he would have rejected himself, had he been even then free to choose. How many of the clergymen who advocate 'celibacy,' receive vows, and admit ladies to Sisterhoods, are themselves practising what they preach? How many of the highest High Church clergy have followed the counsels they advocate, and given the example of renouncing marriage, and all earthly pleasures, for the sole purpose of devoting their lives more entirely to their Master's service?

This, then, was Dr. Pusey's opinion, and this Dr. Pusey's practice. At the Oxford Congress in the year 1862, the Bishop of Oxford spoke as follows on this subject, and said that he spoke as the 'mouthpiece' of those whom he addressed. His opinion was not contradicted, and therefore we must conclude that it was then, at least, that of the High Church party:—

'One single word on the use of the term "religious." I confess, after all that has been said, that I have the very deepest objection in any way whatever to apply the word "religious" to such a life. I think it was adopted at a time when the standard of lay piety was very low; and at all events, as no good seems to me to be got by the use of a word, ambiguous at least in its

meaning, and which seems to imply that God can be better served in the unmarried Sisterhood than in the blessed and holy state of matrimony, I think it is a pity it should be used. I have ventured to trouble the Congress with these few words, believing that I am really the mouthpiece, in this, of the opinion entertained on the subject by the great bulk of those whom I have the honour to address.'

Here the Bishop plainly asserts his opinion that the life of a Sister is not a higher state than that of matrimony, and thereby implies his disbelief, and the disbelief of the clergy in general, in counsels of perfection. What then would an Anglican Sisterhood be? Why should Dr. Pusey allow vows to be made if he approves of this statement? and if he disapproved, why did he not openly and honestly say so?

The Sisterhood at Clewer, which has, I believe, worked well, and done so much good in a quiet unostentatious manner, is really the type of what Protestant Sisterhoods are intended to be. It is simply an assemblage of a number of ladies who find they can do more good to their unfortunate fellow-creatures by living together and working together than by isolated efforts. It is an assemblage of ladies who wish to give their whole time to the service of God, and not fragments of it. Their rule provides for their freedom; they may leave when they please.

In the statutes of the Society, as given by the Rev.

Mr. Carter, in his 'First Ten Years of the House of Mercy, Clewer,' I find the following:—'Every Sister shall have full and uncontrolled liberty, whenever she shall think fit, to leave the Institution.' The bishop of the diocese may or may not have the control of the Sisterhood. If he chooses to accept the office he will be allowed the honour, in all cases getting a first choice; if he declines, his services are calmly ignored, and the Council elects a Visitor.

What, then, is the meaning, the end, or the purpose of the life of a Protestant Sister? unquestionably good and excellent so far as it goes; but certainly not in any way resembling the life of a Catholic nun.

In the Catholic Church vows are an essential condition of the religious state. The Bishop of Oxford may quarrel with the word, but it is an age of word-disputes in more senses than one, and the term religious has been too long used to designate a nun to permit of its disuse. It is true that Dr. Pusey has received vows, and no doubt many Protestant clergymen receive them at present also, and, like him, advocate celibacy for their penitents, while they practise matrimony themselves. But it cannot be too clearly explained that the mere fact of making a vow is not in itself sufficient to constitute a religious. People talk a great deal about nuns and nunneries, but few really have the least idea what a nun is. A

simple answer to this question will I hope interest many.

A nun, then, is a person who has dedicated herself to the service of God by a vow, which vow, to be acceptable to God, and therefore to constitute her a religious, must be made to the authority delegated by him. A simple illustration will at once explain this. A man wishes to become a soldier, and to fight for his Queen and country. He takes an oath to serve Her Majesty, but he must take this oath before the proper authority delegated by her to receive it. He may swear any amount of oaths to his companions and his friends, but they are simply null and void. The same authority also which received his oath can dispense him from it, and that authority only. If he draws back of his own accord he becomes liable to the penalties of a deserter. If he is expelled for bad conduct, *certain forms are gone through to indicate his dismissal, whether he likes it or not;* his military attire is torn from him with ignominy, he is even branded that his disgrace may be known to all, and for the general good the man is sacrificed for life. A person unacquainted with the rules of military discipline and the necessity for it, might think this a cruel proceeding, might say, while there was life there was hope, and that the man should be allowed as many trials as he pleased; why could not his superiors put up with him? As a general rule, poor

humanity judges very harshly of those from whom it receives personal annoyance or trouble, and very leniently of those who inflict annoyance and trouble on others.

I am of course aware that 'advanced Anglicans' now term themselves Catholics, though their Church obtained the distinctive appellation of Protestant solely on account of its protests against Catholicity. They of course, not seeing the circle in which they argue, would consider those vows made by Protestant Sisters as valid; but are they prepared to say that the Church of England sanctions the religious life which it absolutely destroyed at the Reformation, and are they prepared to assert, in the face of 'Catholic antiquity,' that vows made by any lady or gentleman to any other lady or gentleman who may chose to receive them, can be considered as a religious rite? We have the authority of one of the most advanced of the Anglican Bishops for the assertion, that a Sister's life is no higher or holier than the 'blessed and holy state of matrimony.' What then are Protestant Sisters but at best pious ladies living a secluded life from pious motives?

* See Note C for some extracts from Catholic works on the subject of vows.

CHAPTER V.

THE CRIMEAN WAR—MY BROTHER JOINS THE ARMY—SOME OF OUR SISTERS ORDERED ABROAD—MISS JONES PREVIOUSLY HAS OBTAINED A PROMISE OF OBEDIENCE FROM MISS LANGDON—WE ARE DECEIVED IN THIS MATTER—MISS LANGDON IS REQUIRED BY MISS JONES TO TAKE CHARGE OF A LUNATIC—PRESENCE OF MIND, AND SELF-FORGETFULNESS OF THE FORMER—I AM PLACED IN DIFFICULTIES DURING HER ABSENCE —I APPLY TO OUR PARISH CLERGYMAN—HIS ADVICE CONTRARY TO THAT OF MISS LANGDON—MIDNIGHT EXPEDITION IN SEARCH OF A LUNATIC NURSE — OUR SISTERS UNITE WITH MISS LANGDON IN GOING TO THE CRIMEA—MISS JONES THEREBY BECOMES HEAD OF OUR SISTERHOOD—REASONS WHY I CHOOSE TO REMAIN WITH HER.

We had all heard much of the Crimean War, and the cruel sufferings of our brave soldiers, in one of the severest campaigns ever recorded. My dear and only brother, a medical man, had joined the army for the double purpose of serving his country at a time when such service was especially needed, and of improving himself in the practice of a profession to which he was enthusiastically devoted. For his humanity and courage in attending to the wounded under fire, his colonel recommended him for the Victoria Cross. He spent his last evening in England with me at the Sisterhood in Helston Street; and as the Sisters there took the most affectionate interest in each other's anxieties and cares, we often spoke of the stirring

events of the day. Still no one thought that any of our party would be required to share its perils.

One day we heard, to our amazement, that some of the ladies belonging to various Sisterhoods were going to the Crimea. The next intelligence touched us all more nearly, for we were informed that Miss Langdon was to go in charge of a party. Miss Jones had at length obtained the end for which she had laboured so long and so assiduously.

Before entering on this matter, however, I must go back a little. Miss Jones having failed to gain us in any way to her 'obedience,' determined to try another plan, which might have succeeded only for our obstinate and determined resistance. When she found it hopeless to make further attempts on us by a bold stroke of policy—for she was in her way a clever woman, though by no means intellectual—she determined to get Miss Langdon under her control, and she succeeded. The affair was managed thus. It has been already remarked that Miss Langdon found herself in a difficult position. She was naturally timid and distrustful of herself, and somewhat wanting in the decision of character so eminently necessary for successful government, domestic or otherwise. Her perplexities were increased tenfold by the way in which Dr. Smithson acted. He never upheld her authority, yet, if any complaint was made to him that the Sisters were not obedient, he blamed her. 'I never have such

complaints at Weston Mere,' he would exclaim with a sigh; and certainly he did not, for Miss Jones ruled supreme, and no one ever thought of appealing from her to the Doctor. Had they done so, he would speedily have silenced them.

Miss Langdon became very unhappy. She was told again and again that she was a hindrance to the great work of restoring the religious life in the Anglican Church; and at last her humility and timidity combined to make her take a step which she bitterly regretted afterwards. In 1853, by Dr. Smithson's request, and at Miss Jones's instigation, Miss Langdon made a solemn promise of obedience to Miss Jones. The absurdity of such a proceeding is manifest even to those least acquainted with Catholic practices. Here was a lady who had made vows to a clergyman, and was the acknowledged Superioress of our Sisterhood, making a promise, which was considered by Miss Jones, and by all concerned, to have the full force of a vow, to another lady, and thereby virtually placing us all under her rule, though not one of us would have accepted it had we been asked to do so.

The bishop was taken in about our rule, and we were taken in about our Superior. I do not like to characterise either of these proceedings as they merit.

Miss Langdon now hoped for peace. Hitherto Miss Jones had been constantly interfering in our affairs in the most uncalled-for manner. Miss Langdon there-

fore stipulated that this promise should only refer to herself; but Miss Jones, with characteristic duplicity, said that Miss Langdon must 'trust her for fully understanding and respecting her position.' How this promise was kept will be seen later on.

Miss Jones's first assumption of authority was to require Miss Langdon to take charge of a maniac. This poor woman had been left in charge of one of Miss Jones's many establishments, and suddenly became violently outrageous. Two of Miss Jones's Sisters, one her head Sister, and the other a lay Sister, found themselves unable to manage her; and Miss Jones, knowing that Miss Langdon was admirably suited for the care of the sick, or indeed for any other position of responsibility, commanded her immediate attendance. Miss Langdon left Helston by the next train after she had received the summons, travelled all night, and arrived, worn and weary, at A—— next morning. An hour or two after her arrival, and without allowing her time for the rest necessary after such a journey, and still more necessary in circumstances that required great bodily strength and command of nerve and feeling, the Sisters in charge left the lonely country house, and went to Miss Jones, who was then staying at another of her establishments, a day's journey from the place. A young girl and two women from a neighbouring village were left with Miss Langdon. Happily for the poor maniac Miss Langdon was one who could

easily soothe or win confidence. She perceived some likeness in her to a lady of rank, with whom she had lived as housekeeper; this in some degree facilitated the task of controlling her wild frenzies. For three weeks Miss Langdon continued her labours of love, without one to whom she could turn for help or sympathy in this dreadful trial. The woman had attempted self-destruction several times, and was only saved by the incessant watchfulness of her faithful guardian. On one occasion, when poor Miss Langdon, utterly worn out with watching her, had retired for a brief rest, she was suddenly awakened by one of the women left in charge of the maniac, who had actually overpowered the other, and nearly killed her. Even when thus roughly called from her brief and too much needed rest, Miss Langdon's presence of mind did not forsake her, and she contrived to calm for a time the paroxysm of the poor patient, to save her from self-destruction, on which she was bent, and from being the unintentional murderer of her guardians.

Three weeks passed; and Miss Jones, though fully aware of the painful position in which she had placed Miss Langdon, did not attempt to release her, or to send her any assistance. At the end of this time, Miss Jones, who was constantly removing from one place to another, wished to come herself to A—— for change of air, as it was supposed to be necessary for her health to do so. She sent peremptory orders to Miss

Langdon to remove the lunatic, reckless of the suffering to all parties, but determined that she should not be inconvenienced. Miss Jones wished the poor woman to be placed in the county asylum, but the medical men in attendance refused the necessary certificate, as they had hopes of her recovery.

It so happened that a few days after Miss Langdon's sudden summons, I had a letter from home, stating that family affairs absolutely required my immediate return. In Miss Langdon's absence I felt in a great difficulty how to act. Dr. Smithson's movements were uncertain, and if I wrote to him I knew that I might not get an answer for several days. It would have taken as long to obtain a reply from Miss Langdon. I consulted with Sister J——, 'our eldest,' and she, utterly perplexed herself, thought to solve the difficulty by the very natural proposal of sending for the clergyman whose church we attended. He was not a very pleasant person to have dealings with, spiritual or otherwise. His manner was pompous and sarcastic, and he utterly abhorred, or professed to abhor, womankind. I think, however, he was rather flattered at the application. It was the first time that his advice had been asked on any such matter, and he appreciated it accordingly. I showed him the letter, and he at once advised me to go home, made a rambling speech about duties to parents, and departed evidently pleased at the confidence reposed in him. How far he may have

advanced by this time I know not, but then his idea of a Sister's life was very low indeed, though he was himself extremely high. I think he felt hurt, and very naturally, at finding a Sisterhood established in his district over which he had no control; for though we did him the honour of going to his church, and occasionally visiting the poor for him, he knew that all our spiritual affairs were managed by a clergyman of another diocese.

I went home, and Miss Langdon, for the only time during our intercourse, was very angry. She soon, however, saw that we had been both placed in a false position; that when there was no Superior left to guide us, we could not do otherwise than guide ourselves.

The town where my family then lived was at no great distance from A——. When she received Miss Jones's, shall I say unfeeling, mandate to remove the poor lunatic housekeeper before her arrival, and found that she could not be placed in an asylum, she at once determined to get a proper nurse, and carry her to a small town near A——. That night, as I was about to retire to rest, weary both in body and mind, I received a small parcel marked for 'immediate special delivery,' which had come in by the night train, and was brought by a special messenger in a cab to our house. I was amazed, for such occurrences were rare in our peaceful household, and at that time I had no experience whatever of Miss Jones's expensive and

eccentric method of conducting the affairs of her Sisterhood.

The parcel merely contained a letter from Miss Langdon, mentioning the circumstances in which she was placed, and entreating me most earnestly to send her a proper lunatic nurse at once. My affection for her, and my grief when I found the position in which she was placed, would not allow me to delay a moment. Besides, she had requested me to send a person by the next train, no matter at what hour of the night her missive might arrive. I dressed myself hastily, sent for a cab, and went with my maid direct to the residence of my medical man, who was not a little astonished to see me at that hour of the night, knowing my delicate state of health. He came with me at once, and drove to the lunatic asylum, where he made the necessary inquiries and obtained the addresses of some suitable persons. It was several hours after midnight before we could find any one who would go on such a mission. At last we succeeded; and the good doctor, who had been the friend, and almost the father, of my childhood, and the confidant of later years, left me safely at home, with an injunction not to attempt to rise until he saw me next day.

I was none the worse for the midnight adventure, and only too happy to have rendered a service, at some little inconvenience to myself, to one who was so dear to me as Miss Langdon. I did not know until long

after of the heartless selfishness which had caused so much inconvenience to so many people. The nurse I sent answered admirably. Miss Langdon removed the poor patient to lodgings, where they both attended her, while Miss Jones enjoyed herself in the very beautiful house and grounds which they had left. The poor woman was eventually removed to the county asylum of her native place, and died there, I believe by refusing to eat.

Miss Langdon was now free to return to Helston, and soon after I returned there also. For some time our lives passed on quietly and peacefully, until the order for our departure to the Crimea.

I shall never forget my grief and anguish when I heard of this Crimean plan. I saw at once that our Sisterhood would be broken up entirely, and I had fully hoped and earnestly desired to end my days therein. It is true I had always a misgiving of a future grief, there seemed so little permanence in my arrangements. I could not for a moment deceive myself into the belief that Sisterhoods were in any way recognised by the Protestant Church. I knew we were simply a private institution, a sort of fancy experiment, whose existence depended on individuals who might or might not continue their support. Our numbers were few, and we rarely received a new member; so that it seemed not only possible but probable that we might die out. It was not a very cheering prospect; and yet

I clung to it, loved it, and would not for any consideration have returned to my family. When Miss Langdon told me that she was going to the Crimea, and going, moreover, in a few days, I felt utterly stunned and bewildered. Miss Jones, I was informed, would not go, but she would take Miss Langdon's place over us; and as our only strong Sisters were ordered abroad, she would, of course, send some of her Sisters to supply their places with us. I had my choice either to give myself up to Miss Jones's tender mercies or to return home. I made my choice deliberately. I knew I could leave at any time if I wished, and as I had entered on the life of a Protestant Sister from conscientious motives, I did not feel myself free to alter my determination from an apprehension of evil which might not be verified. At least I should be in a position to judge for myself of the truth or falsehood of the strange stories that I had heard.

I heard also that in placing myself under Miss Jones I might be liable to be sent hither and thither, as her fancy or her convenience might suggest. Therefore, having freely placed myself in this position, it must be clearly understood that I submitted voluntarily to the strange mode of life which I am now about to record, and that I do not in any way whatsoever blame Miss Jones for her treatment of me personally, although I think it right to relate many things which are not much to the credit either of her head or her heart.

I think it most unjust, when a person places herself of her own free will in a certain position, and of her own free will remains therein, that she should complain of what she endures as a *personal* matter. But there is another, and a very important, view which may be taken of the circumstances in which I was placed. Miss Jones professed to conduct a religious house; professed, in fact, to be the Lady Superior of a number of individuals who were assembled to live together under a religious Rule. Such individuals had assuredly a right to expect that nothing should be required from them in any way inconsistent with the known rules and regulations of religious Orders. Each individual had therefore every right to complain of, and protest against, any requirements, exactions, or practice opposed to those rules.

CHAPTER VI.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MISS JONES'S VIEW OF THE RELIGIOUS LIFE AND OURS—SHE CONSTITUTES HERSELF SUPERIOR—MISS JONES ALTERS AND AMENDS THE RULE OF ST. BENEDICT FOR HER CHILDREN—A MANIFESTATION OF POPULAR FEELING AGAINST MISS JONES IN A RAILWAY CARRIAGE—OUR ARRIVAL AND CHEERLESS RECEPTION—NEGLECT OF THE OFFICE—SOME ACCOUNT OF THE WORK IN MISS JONES'S ESTABLISHMENT—THE CHARITABLE LABOURS GREATLY EXAGGERATED—THE ORPHANS FEW AND NEGLECTED—THE POOR SCHOOL BADLY ATTENDED—THE COLLEGE FOR BOYS AND CLUB FOR MEN PROSPEROUS, BUT UNFIT WORK FOR WOMEN—MONEY RECKLESSLY WASTED EVERYWHERE—THE CLEWER SISTERHOOD BETTER MANAGED.

ALL was so hurried, so sudden, so unexpected, that when I found myself in a railway carriage travelling to one of Miss Jones's many establishments, it seemed to me like a dream. Miss Langdon had acted with her usual nobleness of character. She had already some experience of Miss Jones, and her very peculiar views of the religious life; yet she was most careful never to allude to the subject either to myself or others, and even to herself she made a thousand excuses for what seemed inexcusable, and tried to persuade herself that it was a sin to question the wisdom of Miss Jones's decisions, or the prudence of her conduct. The weight of Dr. Smithson's authority, all-powerful in itself, was always thrown with preponderating force in Miss

Jones's favour; hence Miss Langdon, naturally distrustful of herself, and with far clearer ideas about the life we all professed to lead than either of her guides, was placed in a most peculiar position.

All Miss Jones's 'views' of a Sister's life were utterly opposed to ours. She neither wished for episcopal supervision nor considered it in any way necessary. We always felt that we were far from being obedient children of the Church if we did not obey the prelates of the Church. It looked like a ghastly mockery to vow obedience to a line of conduct which we knew our bishop disapproved, and to be ruled and guided by a clergyman of another diocese. We were aware that the bishop had a high esteem for Dr. Smithson personally—and who had not?—but we were also quite aware that they disagreed entirely on the most important theological questions, some of which have been already mentioned.

Again, Miss Jones required a personal obedience to herself on her own sole authority, which was very perplexing. If Miss Langdon asked us to obey her, she could at least plead that she had Dr. Smithson's authority for hers; and he argued a sort of permission or rather toleration from the bishop as the sanction for us. The value of that sanction can be appreciated by those who remember what I have stated about the Rule and Prayers for the Dead. This at least was some authority, such as it was. Miss Jones had none. The bishop of one of the dioceses in which she had a house

had withdrawn his approbation when he found her coming before the public in an unpleasant manner, though he left her at liberty to go on her own responsibility. Henceforth she was sole Superior of herself and all who placed themselves under her direction. The position was a very dangerous one, and has led, as might be expected, to the most deplorable results.

At first Miss Jones commenced with professing herself desirous to visit the sick and the poor, and in a very simple way to devote herself to works of mercy. A strong desire for the restoration of the religious life had manifested itself in England, and principally amongst the noble and the wealthy. There were few, indeed, willing to make a personal sacrifice of themselves to promote what they so much desired, but there were many who were liberal with their alms, and money was much wanted. The Sisterhood at Helston went on the quiet tenor of its way, and little was said or thought about it. Miss Jones came before the public, her work was praised, and marvellously overrated. She herself was publicly and privately lauded everywhere by Dr. Smithson, and his opinion had a weight with those most interested in such matters which could hardly be understood by others.

Thus little by little, and yet with some rapidity, Miss Jones found herself placed, and I must add, helped to place herself, on a dangerous eminence. She considered the life of a Sister of Mercy too com-

monplace for a mission like hers. She had visions of instituting orders of different kinds all over England, and of all she was to be the sole Superior; hence her desire of getting our Sisterhood under her rule. She had persuaded herself, and, what was far more important, she had persuaded Dr. Smithson, that the great work of establishing religious houses in the Church of England could only be carried out effectually if placed under one Superior, and that Superior should be herself.

She had made another discovery also. Her birthday was on the Feast of St. Benedict. St. Benedict was a Catholic; his Rule was Catholic; his Order had continued to flourish with uninterrupted prosperity for over a thousand years. There had been no reformation in it, or need for reformation or for change; but, as I have said, Miss Jones was a Protestant, and so could not very well become the Superior of a Catholic Order; had she been a Catholic, she would have been obliged to enter it as novice, and to continue many years under obedience herself, before she could have had even the least chance of having others under obedience to her.

I cannot say whether it was the fact of the Feast of St. Benedict occurring on her birthday that caused her to select his Rule for her Order—after, of course, purging it thoroughly from all the mistakes and ignorances of the Saint; but I know that this was the general opinion

among her Sisters. St. Benedict's Day was kept as a high festival; but whether in honour of St. Benedict or Miss Jones I could never very clearly ascertain. It is known that Dr. Pusey took a great deal of pains to adopt and revise the Rules of Catholic Saints for use in the Protestant Church, and that he expressed himself, in the preface to his reformed version of the 'Paradise of the Soul,' as blessedly assured that those holy men, who now saw their former darkness, and his superior light, would thank him for the service he had done them. Probably Miss Jones held the same view with regard to her adaptation of the Rule of St. Benedict.

As we journeyed from Helston to our temporary resting-place at B——, an incident occurred which showed how strong the popular feeling was against our new Superior. It was late at night, and the lamps had already been lit in the railway carriage, when a party of men entered the next compartment to ours. They discovered who we were, and when we stopped at the next station we were assailed with remarks about Miss Jones and Dr. Smithson, which were too horrible to record. I had no idea at the time that either had given occasion in any way, however unintentionally, for such observations. To my grief and anguish, for the sake at least of Dr. Smithson, for whom I ever retained the highest regard, I found subsequently that such remarks were widely circulated, both in public and in

private; for such things take wing with the rapidity of an air-blown seed vessel, sink down for a time unheeded, only to spring up with fresh vigour, and a more dangerous growth.

I do not wish to say anything about such matters, and therefore I shall refrain from mentioning details, known to myself and to others, which would be as painful to me to record as they would be to the reader to peruse.

At the next station, the men seemed determined to assail us personally, and one of them opened the door of the carriage, and asked rudely if Miss Jones was there The Sister who had charge of our party had anticipated such a scene, and appeared quite accustomed to it. She had rather peremptorily desired us not to reply if any one spoke to us, and she now answered the man's enquiry in a more courteous tone than that in which she had addressed us. It was my first experience of 'y^e^ manners and customs' of Miss Jones's society, and it was not a very pleasant one.

One of the Helston Sisters, my tall strong friend, had accompanied us, and another, a great invalid; and I felt with some satisfaction that the former was a host of protection in herself. We retired very weary, and I at least very sadly, to the rooms prepared for us, which seemed dreary and comfortless to the last degree, after the cheerful cells of our own conventual-looking building. Next morning I had another initia-

tion into the manners and customs of our new Sisters, which by no means reassured me. Sister A—— and I were requested to go to the Oratory together to say Prime and Tierce, as no one else had time to do so. We who had been accustomed to the utmost exactness and punctuality about saying Office at Helston, were somewhat startled at this announcement; but we attributed it to the general confusion which had ensued on the suddenness of the departure of the Sisters destined for the Crimea. I at least hoped for this, but Sister —— was by no means disposed to take such a cheerful view of our affairs. In a few days we made a further journey. I neither asked nor cared where I was going, or for what purpose. A few days after we arrived at what I supposed, in my then ignorance of Miss Jones's view of the Benedictine Rule, would be our permanent abode, the majority departed suddenly and mysteriously whither I knew not, and I was left with a few of Miss Jones's Sisters. My own two dear companions I never saw again.

I had heard wonders of the work done at ——, and was expecting to hear and see much that would interest me greatly. Poor Miss Jones had ever made the most of herself and her charitable labours. A kindly clergyman, anxious to encourage her and to help forward the great work, had lauded her and her doings both in public and private. Elaborate articles had appeared in sympathising serials and High Church papers, and

Dr. Smithson was unwearied in her praise, and took her account of her work, as he did of her domestic regulations, solely on trust in her word.

I do not mean to say that Miss Jones ever made false statements about her work, but *I know* that all the accounts I had heard of it were greatly exaggerated. Three or four orphans who were badly cared for, badly taught, and who led a most unhappy life, were magnified into 'a large orphanage where,' &c. A poor school, of twenty or thirty children at the most, was 'a great work of mercy imparting instruction to hundreds;' and it should be remembered here that the poor never sent their children, either to us in Helston or to other Sisterhoods, except under the pressure of extreme poverty. Then there was a home for aged men of good character, which contained precisely three inmates of doubtful reputation; and a college for boys, which was unquestionably the most flourishing part of the establishment. I heard that some gentleman allowed at one time 500*l.* a year for its support, but I do not vouch for the accuracy of this statement. I do, however, say, that it was out of all character, and an outrage on the rules of common propriety, for women to keep such an institution. It worked well for the time, because it happened to be under the care of an elderly lady admirably suited for the undertaking; but such a person might not be found again in a century, and it was an institution which should

have been confided to men. It happens, however, that every attempt at establishing this kind of life among men in the Protestant Church has signally failed, and poor Mr. Lyne's intermittent or eccentric attempts at doing the work, appear likely to be the only 'sign of life' in that respect.

There was another work at Weston Mere also which should never have been undertaken by women. It was a club for men—an admirable thing in its way, like the 'College' for boys—but by no means women's work. In truth, Miss Jones seemed rather to appreciate masculine enterprises, and it might be this which suggested to Dr. Smithson the idea of her fitness for episcopal jurisdiction.

I believe the fact was that the poor were very unwilling to receive the visits of the Sisters unless driven to it by abject poverty, when the alms they brought became a consideration of moment. They were also unwilling to send their children to our schools unless induced by similar reasons. Thus Miss Jones was obliged to find or make work for the Sisters of an unusual kind; and few parents could resist the temptation of having a boy taken into an establishment where he was well clothed, well fed, and comfortably provided for in a respectable station.

Another work of mercy was the soup kitchen. This, however, was wretchedly mismanaged. It was open to all who chose to come to it. The fare was most

tempting, and I speak from personal knowledge when I say that it was principally distributed to the roughs of the town. It was, indeed, supposed to be a rule that the man who guarded the door should admit aged persons first, and then, when all of such condition had entered, any class of persons might come in, until the tables, fitted up in a ruinous loft, were entirely filled. I think about 200 persons could be accommodated at once. But the aged and infirm who came were few, and the roughs were many. Hence there was a reckless expenditure of money, which, if only applied with a little common prudence, might have done incalculable good. This reckless expenditure characterised every department, and was in fact the rule. I shall say much more on this subject later. After a time, indeed, that portion of the public on whose munificent alms Miss Jones depended for the support of her houses, found out, or suspected in some degree, what was going on, and many contributions were withdrawn in consequence. Miss Jones, however, instead of curtailing reckless waste, discontinued some of her works of mercy. Thus those who still had faith in her had their contributions squandered and wasted as before.

I am pained to speak of this, but I think it a duty to do so. If these immense sums of money had been given to an establishment like Clewer, where one work of mercy is carried on regularly and steadily, the

dónors would have known how their money was spent. They would have had the reward even in this world of assisting in the noble work of raising the fallen, and they would have known that their money was spent in the way in which they had intended. I have no personal interest whatever in Clewer. I never was there; I never saw the clerical president, nor do I even know who is the Superioress at the present time. My sole object in making these remarks is the desire that benevolent purposes should not be frustrated.

It may be said, since Clewer was established at the time of which I write, why did I not join that Sisterhood. I think the reader would have every right to ask such a question, and I shall reply to it; but I may have some difficulty in making myself clearly understood.

It has already been intimated that very different views were held by different individuals on the subject of what, with the permission of the Bishop of Oxford, I must still be permitted to call the religious life. Some persons took his lordship's view, and thought it merely an assembly of pious women devoted to good works. This was the opinion of the majority, and this at least, at the time of which I write, was certainly the view at Clewer. Ladies boarded and lodged together, agreeing as a mutual convenience to observe certain regulations. A friend of mine, much and greatly interested in Clewer, spoke to me about it, and I found

from conversation with her that the wife of the clergyman in charge had quite as much to do with the establishment as the clergyman. I had known a good deal of the proceedings of ladies' committees, and of the annoyance caused by the interference of clergymen's wives in parish affairs, and this announcement at once decided me against Clewer.

But there were 'higher' views held by some few. Dr. Smithson, though professing not to recommend the practice of the counsels, and quite agreeing in all Dr. Pusey's views on this subject, looked on Clewer with doubtful eye, considered Helston a very superior state, but even that was far inferior to Weston Mere. Miss Jones aimed at the contemplative life, and took very much higher ground. Hence, when I came to choose a Sisterhood, I would at once have chosen Miss Jones's establishment had I not (I will honestly admit) considerable fear of Miss Jones herself. Dr. Smithson naturally advised his penitents to the higher course, and, thinking as he did, he was undoubtedly right in doing so.

I have said that Dr. Smithson agreed remarkably on most subjects with Dr. Pusey, but there was one on which we must suppose that they differed widely. In Dr. Pusey's letter to the Bishop of London, from which I have already quoted, he speaks thus of the contemplative life:—

'And for myself, I may say, when some ardent minds

have spoken to me of "the contemplative life," I have said, apart from other grounds, that the love of Christ did not now permit it to them; that amid this waste of souls, purchased by His Precious Blood, persons must seek to "perfect holiness in the fear of God, and to grow in the love of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," while "cherishing and showing forth love to Him in His afflicted brethren."'

Dr. Smithson warmly supported Miss Jones's view, and encouraged her in every way in trying to establish a contemplative Order. We must therefore conclude that he did not agree on this point with Dr. Pusey, who could not be supposed for a moment to advocate the contemplative life in private when he declared publicly that he did not advocate it. What the 'other grounds' may have been which induced him to write thus, I cannot pretend to guess; but his reason for hindering 'ardent minds' from practising contemplation seems rather curious, viewed in the light of Catholic teaching, or even of that antiquity to which Dr. Pusey so often and so fondly appeals. Catholic theology teaches that it is the love of Christ which induces Catholics to devote themselves to Him either in the active or contemplative Orders; therefore, in the Catholic Church the 'love of Christ' could never be adduced as a motive for rejecting the latter state. Besides, Dr. Pusey apparently does not know that the object of the contemplative life is first the sanctification

of the individual, and then the sanctification of the Church, and the conversion of sinners by the prayers of the individual. Hence a nun in a contemplative Order may do quite as much for souls as a Sister of Mercy. Who can blame him for not understanding a theology or a practice so different from that of his own Church?

CHAPTER VII.

THE DRESS WORN BY PROTESTANT SISTERS—SOME ACCOUNT OF A CATHOLIC NOVITIATE—THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN POSTULANT, NOVICE, AND PROFESSED SISTERS AT HELSTON AND WESTON MERE CONSISTED ONLY IN THE DRESS—MISS JONES'S PECULIAR ARRANGEMENTS—SHE HAS FOUR DIFFERENT CLASSES OF SISTERS—SHE ADOPTS SOME IDEAS FROM EPISCOPACY AND SOME FROM DISSENT—NO INSTRUCTION GIVEN TO THE SISTERS AS TO THEIR DUTIES—A 'CHILD' ASKS SHOULD SHE STEAL IF DESIRED, AND IS NOT CONTRADICTED—A DAY'S JOURNEY TAKEN BY SIX PERSONS TO GO TO CONFESSION—MISS JONES'S PECULIAR IDEAS ABOUT CONFESSION—SHE DOES NOT ALLOW ANY SISTER TO GO TO CONFESSION UNLESS SHE IS IN THE HOUSE—PAINFUL FACTS ABOUT HER INTERCOURSE WITH DR. SMITHSON.

If I remember rightly, it was late in the autumn when I came to Weston Mere. I was appointed to some light duty, and every consideration was shown for my delicate state of health. I have said that I had placed myself under Miss Jones, and in compliance with her wish I now adopted the dress worn by ladies on their first admission to the society. I had previously worn the dress of the Helston Sisterhood. But I must briefly explain these little matters. At Helston, in imitation of the three steps, if I may so call them, of the Catholic religious life, there were three degrees of dress, for most truly the distinction consisted merely in that. In a Catholic convent, ladies when admitted lay aside their secular or worldly apparel, and assume a plain black

dress and black cap and veil—not, of course, a nun's veil, but a covering for the head—of some light material. They remain as postulants for a term of about six months, during which time they have every opportunity of judging for themselves as to whether they like their new mode of life; and what is quite as important, the Sisters of the convent have the opportunity of finding whether the postulant has a vocation for the state to which she believes herself called. At the end of this period the lady is formally proposed to the community by the Superior as wishing to receive the habit of religion, and to be admitted to a further and closer trial of the life. If the votes of the professed Sisters are given in her favour, she is then allowed to receive the religious habit, for which a special ceremony has been sanctioned by the Church. A year, at the least, is obliged to be spent by the novice, as the lady is now termed, during which time she is carefully instructed by the mistress of novices in the duties she may be called to perform; she is given the Rule to read; it is fully explained to her. There are no mysteries, no concealments; and further, and most important of all, she is shown the bulls or rescripts by which the Holy See has sanctioned and established the Order of which she aspires to be a member, and the rules which she wishes to vow to observe. Here all is plain, clear, open, and unreserved.

The solemn moment then comes when she will make

her vows. She has had full time for deliberation. The Sisters have also had sufficient time to form their opinion of her. They vote for or against her by ballot, and even the Superior does not know, until she opens the ballot-box, what the votes will be. If the majority of votes are in her favour, she is then received to profession, but until the very moment in which she makes her vows she is still free to return to her friends.

These vows are received by the bishop, as the representative of the Holy See, the source of all authority in the Church. Should he be unable to attend, he deputes his authority to a priest. The bishop, or a priest deputed by him, is also obliged to see the lady alone, and examine carefully whether it is her real wish to be professed in that order; and he is obliged to sign a written certificate to that effect.*

But although these practices were imitated in some respects at Helston and Weston Mere, the general mode of procedure was very different. At Helston ladies remained an indefinite time as 'probationers,' and at an indefinite time were allowed to assume the dress of the Sisters and called 'Sister probationers,' after some kind of vague ceremony performed by Dr. Smithson. They might perhaps hear of it the night before, or be asked a few days before his arrival, would they like to assume the dress. After an equally indefinite period, they were made full Sisters, and instead of wearing a girdled

* See Note D.

cap assumed our peculiar head-dress. I never attained this distinction. I did not much care about it, in the first place: why should I? It made no difference in our spiritual state that I could see, and there was supposed to be something binding about it that I could never understand. I ascertained later that the reason this change was not pressed on me was that I had no idea of taking vows; in fact, until some time after I left the Sisterhood, I did not know that vows were taken in the third stage, so much secrecy was there, even amongst ourselves, and so little knowledge had some of us of what others practised or believed.

Miss Jones's arrangements were entirely different. She by no means approved of copying Catholic practices without some improvement of her own: consequently her plans had at least the merit of great originality. She had no less than five ranks in her Society. There was first the novice, corresponding to the Catholic postulant, but with the great exception that, whereas it is the first object in a Catholic convent to instruct the postulant fully in all the rules and regulations of the house and the Order, the first object in Miss Jones's was to prevent her from knowing anything that could possibly be concealed. The next step, taken at irregular intervals, and regardless of the lady's wishes or feelings, was to make the novice a 'child.' She was then promoted to a black dress and small white muslin apron and cap, the apron being

intended, I was informed, as a badge of servitude—I suppose to Miss Jones; and indeed I knew one poor novice whose life I fear was sacrificed to the personal slavery she endured in waiting on that lady. The third step was to make a Sister. The fourth and fifth steps were a compound of episcopacy and dissent. From episcopacy Miss Jones borrowed the title of Dean, and made it feminine with an *e*; from dissent Miss Jones borrowed the title of Elder, and made it feminine with an *ess*.

Some of my readers will think I am scarcely serious in these statements; but once more let me assure them that this work is a narrative of facts, and that I have been most careful to avoid even the least exaggeration. The Deane, for there was only one, and the Eldresses, had been made according to the rite provided by Miss Jones for such ceremonies, where obtained I know not. The Deane herself told me a curious story about the fashion in which she obtained her distinctive appellation. She had charge of the College, and the boys were very much attached to her. Rumours were going about that some of the elder Sisters were going 'to be made something.' The boys heard that their Sister was not included in the list of promotions, and threatened a revolt. Miss Jones heard of the affair, and thereupon made the lady a Deane. The Deane wore a ring, with ten small nobs on the outside, which puzzled me extremely; but of course, as I was a novice, and therefore, reversing the rule of Catholic practice, kept in ignorance

of the state of life to which I was supposed to be an aspirant, I could never obtain any information on the subject of the nobs. Some time after I had left Miss Jones, a friend showed me a rosary ring of precisely the same construction, and the mystery was thereby solved.

I said that there were five ranks, but I should, I believe, have said six. There was above and beyond the Eldress a Mother Eldress—and finally Miss Jones. What she wished her own title to be I could never ascertain clearly. I once saw a number of newspaper labels which she had printed for Dr. Smithson to enclose his papers in to her, and the title thereon was the 'Lady Mother.' Once more I fear my readers will be incredulous. I can simply repeat that I saw those labels myself, and that they were used for the purpose I mention. The title of 'Lady Mother,' though it sounds very absurd at first, admits of some explanation. At the time—the reader will remember that I am writing of events which happened at least fifteen years ago—it would have created a storm even amongst the High Church party had Miss Jones assumed the name of Lady Abbess; the Lady Mother, I suppose she considered the most dignified and safest approximation to that much-coveted title.

I asked a very learned Benedictine once if he could give me any clue to the reason for the adoption of the other titles. The 'Child' was a mere fancy appellation;

the Deane, he said, might have been suggested by the fact that in very ancient times, when an immense number of monks lived together in one monastery, and many devoted themselves to manual labours, every tenth monk had a superintendence of the work done by nine under his charge; but the office was abolished centuries ago, with the necessity for it. I need scarcely add that there were no Lady Deanes. As to the Eldress, the title was probably a queer imitation of the Benedictine Dame, and not, I think, a very happy one. When Miss Jones was going so very near Rome, it seemed strange that she should take a title from Geneva.

I have said that those who wished to become Sisters never received any instruction as to their duties or state. How could they, when probably no two persons in the Sisterhood held the same 'view' about the religious life and its obligations? In Helston Miss Langdon had lent me one or two French books on the religious life, as, of course, there were no Protestant works published on such a subject. From them I got some idea of the life, and I was not a little rejoiced when I was informed, soon after my arrival at Weston Mere, that the Mother Eldress gave instruction occasionally to the younger Sisters, novices, and children, and that I was to attend. This lady was still young, and a person of extraordinary beauty and a most winning manner. It was said indeed that but for her

influence and persuasiveness, Miss Jones would never have kept her Sisterhood together.

Those who were to be favoured by her teaching were assembled in her room. We were not more, I think, than four or five in all. The Mother Eldress, though extremely attractive in appearance, was by no means a person of profound intellect. I forget what she said during the few minutes we remained with her, but I quite distinctly remember that I was utterly disappointed, and that I learned nothing of the life I so much wished to understand fully. There was indeed only one subject which was ever spoken of in regard to this point at Weston Mere, and that was obedience. The sole idea of obedience consisted in abject submission to Miss Jones's will and pleasure, without the slightest reference to any higher motive. The virtue of obedience, as inculcated in Catholic convents, is founded on reason and justice; no Superior can command a nun to do anything merely because she pleases; no Superior can command a nun to commit an imperfection or a sin; no Superior can command a nun to do anything contrary to the Rule, and the Superior is just as much under obedience, and bound to obey the Rule, as the Sister. All this was totally ignored at Miss Jones's, the obedience demanded was personal to Miss Jones and to her orders, whether given herself or through others, and, I must add, whether right or wrong.

'We must all obey 'dearest mother' in everything, was the sum total of the exhortation. A sister of Miss Jones was one of the 'Children' present. 'If mother told us to steal anything, ought we not to do so?' she inquired; 'Child —— told me that she would steal if she was desired.' We were seated round a small table, and the 'Child' and I were beside each other. The Mother Eldress pushed her feet under the table to silence the 'Child;' and the foot touched mine in mistake with a very significant pressure. Not one word was said repudiating such doctrine, but evidently the Mother Eldress was annoyed that I should have heard it. In a few days she left Weston Mere, and this was the first and last instruction I ever heard in a Protestant Sisterhood on the religious life.

A short time after I was lighting a fire for one of the old men whom I had been appointed to attend, and one of the orphans came to me from the house where we resided, with a little note from the presiding Eldress, to say we were to go at once to B——, where Miss Jones then was. I was beginning to be accustomed to the erratic movements of the Sisters, and was by no means surprised. In half an hour I found myself in the railway carriage with, I think, nearly all the Sisters who had been in Weston Mere. A Child sat next to me, and I whispered an inquiry to her as to where we were going, and the probable cause. 'Do you not know?' she exclaimed; 'we are going to con-

fession.' It seemed to me an original arrangement, and I meditated on it for some time in silence. The Eldress went to sleep, and as the Sisters never thought it the least necessary to keep silence unless they were watched, we talked to each other. I obtained more information regarding the customs and regulations of the Society during that winter day's journey than I had ever obtained before.

The Child who sat next to me seemed thoroughly disgusted with the whole affair. She protested especially against the waste of money of which our present journey was a sample, and against the utter disregard of religious duties. Indeed they seemed to be the last consideration in the house. I suggested that Dr. Smithson's time was very valuable, that he might be able to come as far as B——, and could not perhaps go on to Weston Mere to hear our confessions; and there was at least that excuse for the expense of taking six or seven Sisters a day's journey by rail. The Child smiled at my simplicity. 'Surely,' she exclaimed, 'you know that no one is allowed to go to confession, even if they were dying, unless mother is in the house?' I was amazed. I scarcely could believe the statement; but I soon ascertained that it was perfectly true. I ascertained further that Miss Jones had, in more than one instance, prevented Sisters from going to confession as a penance for some fault; and I was still more startled by this discovery.

I knew nothing then of Catholic theology, or the teaching of the Catholic Church on the subject, but my own common sense suggested to me that if we went to confession to get absolution for our sins, it was a strange contradiction to keep persons from confession because they had done wrong. Even as the disputes which I had heard on the Gorham question had made me inquire seriously what was the Catholic doctrine about the Sacrament of Baptism; so this statement, which shocked me exceedingly, led me to inquire seriously what was the Catholic doctrine on the Sacrament of Penance.

On my arrival at B——, I found to my surprise that we were not to go to the house occupied by Miss Jones. I soon learned the reason of this, and the reason why she generally had two houses or more, wherever one of her Sisterhoods was established. The house she occupied was very large, and would fully have accommodated every one of the Sisters under her rule. But all the apartments except those devoted to her use and Dr. Smithson's were closed up. Here was another almost incredible waste of money.

When Dr. Smithson came to hear our confessions at Helston he always went into the sacristy, and remained there the greater part of the day. Each Sister went to him in regular rotation, and he never left the apartment except during the brief interval occupied in taking some refreshment. Miss Jones's regulations were

quite different. No one was allowed to see Dr. Smithson unless she was in the house; and, as a general rule, she remained in a room close to that in which he heard the confessions. After he had heard each Sister, he generally went to her at once, before hearing the next Sister. Under such circumstances it was no wonder that we should feel pained, and fear that matters might be communicated to Miss Jones which we considered private.

Miss Jones's Sisters were so accustomed to all this that they took it as a matter of course. But I had known Dr. Smithson was so very particular at Helston that he would not remain in the Sisterhood a moment later than ten o'clock, however he might be pressed for time. I need scarcely say that he never slept in the house or took his meals with any of the Sisters there.

I now ascertained why Miss Jones had made this strange regulation about confession. The Sisters would, and did, from time to time, until they found it quite hopeless, make complaints to Dr. Smithson about the way in which the Sisterhood was managed. Miss Jones found it necessary to be at hand to counteract the effect of these statements, and this I suppose was the reason why he went to her after each confession, remained a short time, and then returned to hear the next Sister. Miss Langdon assured me that on her return from the

Crimea she found the same plan in active operation in Helston, where Miss Jones then was.

The recurrence of such matters placed some of the Sisters in a very painful position, and it was perhaps well for us that we had not the least idea of confession as a sacrament, or our perplexities would have increased tenfold. Had we been Catholics, or had it been possible for Catholic Superiors to act in this manner, it would have been our duty to report the matter to a higher authority. If we had merely suspected such proceedings, and found that after all we might have been guilty of rash judgment, it might have been a matter for confession. But in this case to whom could we appeal?—not, certainly, to either of the individuals whose conduct we blamed and deplored. Happily for our peace of mind, none of us realised in any way that confession was a sacrament in which we obtained absolution for our sins. It was to us merely a 'comfort' and nothing more. Indeed, had it been acknowledged to be a sacrament by our spiritual guides, they would have placed themselves in a position of extreme perplexity. If it had been a sacrament in any way or sense whatever, why was it not acknowledged by the Church to which they belonged? Yet, if it was not a sacrament, and only a comfort or spiritual luxury, which might do some vague good to those who used it, but which was not at all necessary for those who did

not, why should it be practised at all? The utter failure of any attempt to carry out Catholic practices in the Protestant Church, and the great inconsistency involved in so doing, are perhaps the best arguments to prove that they were never intended to exist in it.

CHAPTER VIII.

MISS JONES'S VIEW OF THE DUTIES OF A SUPERIOR—HER LUXURIOUS LIVING AND INDOLENCE—THE EXCUSE FOR IT—EXAMPLES OF THE OBEDIENCE MISS JONES REQUIRED FROM THE SISTERS—A MIDNIGHT EXPEDITION—A 'CHILD' SENT AT NIGHT TO GET SOUP FOR MISS JONES — ILLNESS AND DEATH OF THIS LADY — MISS JONES'S CRUEL NEGLECT OF THE POOR SUFFERER—MISS JONES'S VIEWS OF OBEDIENCE — SHE TOOK AS HER MODEL THE PROTESTANT IDEA OF A 'LADY ABBESS'—HER LUXURIOUSNESS AND SELF-INDULGENCE—SOME ACCOUNT OF A LAY SISTER—HER TRIALS, AND OPINION OF MISS JONES—MISS JONES'S 'SELFISHNESS—EXPERIENCE OF IT BY ANOTHER LAY SISTER—A CONTRADICTION PUBLISHED BY A SISTER WHO KNEW BUT LITTLE OF THE MATTER.

CHANGES in our place of residence and occupations were made so frequently by Miss Jones, that I find it almost impossible, after the lapse of so many years, to remember the exact course of events. I think I was sent back to Weston Mere after my visit to B—— for confession; but that visit and its principal events were engraven on my memory never to be obliterated. It was the first great shock to the confidence I had felt in Dr. Smithson, and I never recovered its effects.

During our stay at B—— we took our meals in the kitchen, all the rooms being closed up, as I have said, except those occupied by Miss Jones, Dr. Smithson, and her two attendants. When we came over there from the house where we slept, the kitchen was also

the place in which we sat. I did not object to this in any way. As I wished to devote myself to the poor, it seemed natural to me that I should myself imitate the poverty I sought to relieve; but there was something in the general arrangements made for us which seemed to me to indicate an utter disregard of what should have been the one purpose of our life. The one object seemed to be Miss Jones and her convenience, not the poor and their benefit.

To attend Miss Jones's bell day and night, and to cook and prepare every delicacy of the season for her use, seemed to me to be the end of the existence of a lay sister, and a 'Child' who waited on her.

Do not misunderstand me. In every Catholic convent, and in the Rules of every religious Order especially, instructions are given that the sick should receive the greatest care—that every necessary should be provided for them; and the Superior is most strictly bound and solemnly required to see that this is done. Should the Superior herself be ill, the infirmarian, or the Mother Assistant, is obliged to see that the Superior has all the care which she would have bestowed on one of the Sisters if their positions had been reversed. But people do not go into a convent to have luxuries; they go into a convent to renounce them. No matter what the religious views or opinions of the reader may be, he can surely understand that a person who makes a vow of poverty intends to practise poverty. The poor have

no luxuries in health, and, alas! seldom have even necessaries in sickness. Hence a nun who has made a vow of poverty does not wish to have, and would not have even in sickness, luxuries, which in her former position in the world she might lawfully use. You may think it very absurd of the nun to refuse these luxuries; but for the moment look at the matter from her point of view, and you will see that at least she is consistent.

There is more habit in our use of luxuries than we think, and I have known persons accustomed to the most delicate refinement of living, who, after a few years in a convent, could scarcely partake of anything but the plainest fare, either in sickness or in health. Before I go further into the question of Miss Jones's mode of living, and the difference between the way she treated herself and treated the Sisters under her, I feel bound in justice to her, and am indeed only too willing, to offer what I believe to be the true excuse for a line of conduct which would otherwise have merited the severest reprobation.

Miss Jones had entered on a certain state of life without the slightest knowledge of its duties or requirements. The only excuse for her having undertaken duties of which she knew nothing, and for her attempting to teach others a kind of life of which she was herself perfectly ignorant, was simply that, as long as she remained externally a member of the Protestant

Church, she could not do otherwise. I observed before, and I repeat again, that if she had been a Catholic she must have gone through a thorough course of instruction and training *herself* before she would have been allowed to teach others. It was a case of the blind leading the blind. The religious life had been abolished and utterly condemned by the Protestant Reformation, and Miss Jones was trying to catch glimpses, through a thick veil, of how that life was carried on in the Church in which it had never ceased to exist. Very naturally she took the Protestant idea of the case. She carried out the Protestant view to perfection. She realised in her own person the Protestant idea of a Lady Abbess. Once more, do not blame her. How could she have done otherwise? She believed, or if she did not express her belief in words, she certainly expressed it in acts, that the Lady Abbess was a person to be exalted on a mighty pinnacle of honour, to be reverenced with almost idolatrous worship, to be obeyed without the slightest consideration as to whether her commands were right or wrong; to rule without being in any way under rule; to subject others to the most severe exactions, and not to be subject herself to any law whatsoever.

No doubt Miss Jones would have denied that this was her theory; a great many of the sufferers from it could give evidence that it was her practice.

I well remember, one evening, at eight o'clock,

hearing a young 'novice,' a girl of eighteen, desired to go off at once by train to a distant town. She told me afterwards that she did not arrive till midnight, that she waited for an hour at the door of the house to which she was sent before she could obtain admittance, and that she was insulted in the street by drunken men. I was myself sent on a midnight expedition, which I shall relate presently; but I had a companion. Miss Jones triumphed in these things, and considered it the perfection of obedience for any Sister to submit to them without a murmur. It was simply the Protestant idea of obedience, that it should be reckless of consequences, that even if a Superior commanded a sin to be committed it should be done. But no Catholic Superior could command such absurdities, for even if she did, she would herself be disobeying the Rule of every religious Order, which in some way or other provides that obedience shall be required only according to reason and justice.

After the departure of the 'novice,' I was sitting in the kitchen, waiting until it was time to retire to bed. We had had our tea just before, which was as simple a meal as we could have. I did not suppose there would be any more cooking that night, and I was not a little amazed, and I must say scandalised, when I heard the lay Sister who attended Miss Jones, desiring the 'Child' to get her bonnet and shawl, and go at once into —— for a delicacy which she mentioned, and which she

said was required for Miss Jones's supper. The young lady—for lady she was by birth, in manner, and in every act—set out instantly. It was a dark winter's night, it rained heavily, and she had a walk of at least a mile and a half down one of the steepest hills I ever saw, and up that hill again. I felt grieved for her, but still more grieved, nay anguished to the very heart, at this utter mockery of obedience—at the exhibition of a person, dressed in a costume which, however unlike that of a Catholic nun, yet made some show of resembling it, in the streets, at that time of night, on such an errand. I expressed some slight feeling on the subject to the lay Sister, but she only replied, 'Oh, she often has to go out at night to get things for mother.'

Poor C——! loving-hearted, unselfish, generous C——! she sleeps now in her quiet grave, where none can weary or disturb her rest; had she but devoted all the time and thought to the poor that she had to spend on Miss Jones, she might still be working for them and for God.

I was not in the house when she died, but I heard from others, on whose testimony I can rely as truly as I could on the evidence of my own senses, that her end was most wretched. She lived for a creature, and that creature failed her in her hour of greatest need. Her constitution was naturally most robust, but she never spared herself for a moment; and, I must add, she was never spared. She was often sent messages up and

down the steep hill before mentioned two and three times in the day, and perhaps again at midnight; in the intervals she was occupied in cooking for Miss Jones, in carrying heavy trays up and down from her apartment, in scrubbing stone floors and passages. That very day on the evening of which she was sent for soup, I had seen her scrub a large kitchen all over, and clean a number of saucepans.

At last her health broke down entirely. Having served Miss Jones so devotedly for so many years, she naturally expected some little return of affection, and her disappointment at not receiving it was proportionably great. Miss Jones had been her idol. So long as poor C—— could labour for her, one smile or one word would have repaid the weariest day's work, or the longest night's watching. She persuaded herself that Miss Jones loved her as much as she loved Miss Jones, and the wakening from her delusion I believe contributed not a little to hasten her end. How many months she must have worked, when utterly unable, before she finally gave up, when every movement must have been made with pain, no one can know now. At last it was manifest, even to those who cared least for her sufferings, that they must end speedily. Miss Jones, though in the same house with her, never saw her or cared to see her. When C——'s cough became very troublesome, Miss Jones desired the Sisters to move her where she could not hear it. When she was

almost dying a medical man was sent for, but not until then. No clergyman was allowed to visit her, and she might find such consolation as she could from the little pictures round her room or her few books of devotion. She was allowed a fire as a great luxury, but as she was required to clean the grate herself, to light it, and to bring up coals, the permission was almost worse than useless.

Even in her last days she was denied almost the necessaries of life. Milk was the only luxury for which she cared, and this she was only allowed twice a day in small quantities. On the very day of her death she begged that her morning and evening portion might be given to her together, for, she said, 'I shall not want it to-night.' The Sister who had charge of supplying it ventured to give what she asked, generously risking the blame she was sure to receive for this act of common humanity. In the evening poor C—— laid herself down quietly on her bed and died.

Miss Jones, who above all things loved a public demonstration, had a splendid funeral, but I never heard that she shed a single tear over the corpse.

It was not the first or last instance in which persons who went into Protestant Sisterhoods, imagining that they would have greater spiritual privileges, found out their mistake when it was too late. How different this death-bed from one which I shall describe presently, where, according to the rule in Catholic Convents—a

rule which no Superior can alter at her pleasure or caprice—the Sister is never left alone for a moment, day or night, once any real danger has been apprehended.

Another peculiar, or perhaps I should rather say Protestant view, which Miss Jones had about her office as 'Lady Mother,' was that she should assume great state. Of course, when she first commenced a Sisterhood, and had only one or two companions, she was obliged to live with them, to take her meals with them, to share their occupations, and to act in a rational manner. It will be remembered, however, that she was always inclined to assume authority, and the incident recorded of her annoyance when not addressed as a Superior occurred at a very early period in her career. By degrees as numbers increased, and her work began to be praised and spoken of, her dignity increased in proportion, and she gradually withdrew herself from the society of the Sisters. Still, even had she not required so much personal attendance, it was necessary that some one should manage her affairs in her absence, and, as a matter of necessity, she treated the Sisters who came to her first in a very different manner.

At one time, indeed, rumours came to our Sisterhood that the Weston Mere Sisters lived quite luxuriously. Miss Jones heard some of our expressions of surprise, for we had everything very plain. She was piqued that

there should be any point in which we were supposed to excel her 'higher state;' and she thereupon altered the whole of her domestic regulations, at least as far as the younger Sisters were concerned. About the same time also she formed the plan of dividing her few Sisters into three or four Orders. Finding it impossible to get the other Sisterhoods under her control, she tried to make the most of her own.

From the very commencement, one of her objects had been to have as many houses as possible in different parts of England. Often one solitary Sister was left for months in a house by herself, merely that Miss Jones might have the name of having a Sisterhood in the place.

The Orders were changed so often, and were so ill-defined when arranged, that it is really difficult to describe what they were. Some were to be Contemplatives, some to be Sisters of Mercy, some to be Solitaires. One unfortunate lady made an attempt at the latter, and was reduced to a state of partial idiotcy in consequence. I believe I was at different times a Contemplative, and a Sister of Mercy, but no one ever was informed in what state they were; you could only guess from your surroundings. At one time you would be occupied in some external work, and at another time you would remain for months in an almost total seclusion.

One of Miss Jones's idiosyncracies consisted in never

seeing the Sisters except at rare intervals — perhaps once in six months. Her health was made the excuse for this and many other equally absurd regulations. It is obvious that she had no right to act as Superioress when she did none of the duties of the office. Many of us protested strongly against this to Dr. Smithson, but our appeals were all in vain. Some strange idea was carefully instilled into his mind by Miss Jones that she permeated and pervaded all places with her presence; that the rules and regulations she made were so admirable we could not fail to benefit by them; that the very fact of her existence was to us some wonderful good, though we could not precisely see it.

It is obvious that even if Miss Jones's regulations for her Sisterhood had been the wisest and best ever devised, she was bound to superintend their action. Very wise regulations may be made for the governance of any institution or society, but their practical working must be tested before their efficacy can be admitted. I do not think Miss Jones's regulations were wise, and it is quite possible she might not have acknowledged their failure even had she herself superintended their working; but at least she would not have had to bear the reproach of placing others under a rule she had never tried herself.

Some of the few Sisters who joined her at first continued with her; others left when her new mode of conducting the Sisterhood came into practice. Only

three or four remained, and they were constantly with her, or employed in superintending the various houses she had purchased or rented in different towns. These Sisters flattered her vanity, and treated her with an almost idolatrous reverence. I believe some of them really loved her. Have we not seen affection lavished again and again upon an unworthy object, or on those who never made the slightest return for the unselfish devotion of their followers? The remainder of the Sisterhood was composed of persons who stayed perhaps two or three months, or two or three years, and then left.

These elder Sisters always defended Miss Jones's conduct both in public and in private; in fact, they could not condemn her without condemning themselves. They never had to bear the restrictions which were put upon the younger Sisters, though they were often subjected to the most capricious treatment, for Miss Jones spared no one in this. Still they really believed that all these absurdities, to use a mild term, were just what would have been practised in a Catholic convent, and hence they submitted to them, if not with a good grace, at least without much exterior murmuring.

They were flattered also by the confidence which Miss Jones reposed in them, by the position of command in which they were placed, and they were continually fascinated by the smiles and caresses of their Supe-

rioress, who assured them that if they only faithfully obeyed her, and carried out her plans, Protestant, or as they termed it Anglican, Sisterhoods would spring up all over England, all to be ruled and governed according to the 'Use' made and provided by Miss Jones, and under their guidance.

Of course these Sisters were perfectly aware of the discontent and murmurs of those under them, but I believe they concealed it as much as possible from Miss Jones. It was difficult to tell how much she knew or how little. Unquestionably, when she appointed herself Superioress, she was bound in common fairness to know everything, and she was morally responsible for all that was done in her Sisterhood. One of the excuses for her mode of life was her health. We were assured again and again she wished to be with the Sisters as a Superioress should be, but that her extreme delicacy obliged her to live apart from us.

I asked a friend of mine for her candid opinion on this subject. She is an elderly lady, long accustomed to nurse every kind of sickness, one who had laboured in the Crimea—the very person, in fact, to whom Miss Jones had confided the care of the poor lunatic, whom her own Sisters were unable to manage. She had every opportunity of ascertaining the truth. I give an extract from her letter:—

'My opinion about Miss Jones's health is, that it is

far from good, but that her self-indulgence and entire want of mental self-control very much aggravated her disorders. She certainly always happened to be laid up at most convenient times, so as just to be hindered going where she did not wish to go, and doing what she did not wish to do. Whenever I happened to be in the house with her the nights seemed to be turned into days, and the days into nights—i.e. judging by the bells in the night inside and outside, footsteps, making up fires, and so on. I myself used to be detained by her in conversation at A—— till the dawn of day, and several times in Helston I have had to get up in the night and go down to the street-door and attend to messages sent by her. She never pretended to take the same fare, when I knew her, as the Sisters. There were pretty cups and saucers provided for her in Helston, for I remember asking what they were for on my return from the East. In Helston Street the kitchen was in one mess all day, through the constant cooking for her; and after I left, C—— R——, our first orphan, who returned to Helston from service, not knowing that I was gone, has told me since that she has had to dress delicate late dinners of game for her and Dr. Smithson, when the orphans used to be kept waiting for their supper; and about the same time it was ordered that a large quantity of water should supersede a like proportion of their new milk.'

I believe this account to be strictly true. It simply

confirmed my own opinion. If Miss Jones had lived with; and as, the Sisters, I think her health would have been excellent. It so happened that on more than one occasion I saw her dinner tray preparing in the kitchen. The lay Sister who had charge of the cooking, though not of waiting on Miss Jones, often poured out her griefs to me. She was a bright cheerful-looking girl, and it took a great deal to disturb her equanimity or make her fret. But her circumstances were very trying. She had lived, she informed me, for some years with two elderly ladies, to whom she seemed much attached. They became High Church, went to confession, and placed themselves under Dr. Smithson's guidance. Not being inclined to sacrifice themselves, they sacrificed the poor girl. Dr. Smithson painted the 'life' at Miss Jones's establishment to her in glowing colours; and after some persuasion, she consented to go there. Her position was a very painful one, and I pitied her most sincerely. She worked hard and willingly, but she felt not a little the way in which she had been treated. The ladies were not to blame; they did what they believed to be best for her. When she was safely placed under Miss Jones's maternal care, Dr. Smithson never took the least notice of her. Though he often spent days in the house, he remained with Miss Jones except during the brief space of time which he occupied hearing confessions. E—— also complained bitterly of what we all felt, that reli-

gious duties were grossly neglected, though they were supposed to be one of our great objects. She got no instruction, no advice, no good books to read: it was all, as she said to me once, work—work—work; and she was not without deep religious feeling, nor without keen, clear common sense, which made her take a very correct view of the whole affair.

E—— also spoke to me several times about Miss Jones's luxurious mode of living, but I always checked her. I could not believe it; nay, I would not believe it, until conviction was absolutely forced on me. I thought that in her delicate state of health, which I never doubted to be real, she might require what would be unnecessary for others, and what she would be perfectly justified in having. I knew also later that one of the Sisters was constantly sent out at night to get bottled ale for Miss Jones's supper. A lay Sister also went sometimes, and not having so high an idea of 'obedience,' or of Miss Jones's view of it, was scandalised and ashamed at being sent to a common public-house at such an hour, on such an errand, and in such a dress.

One of the 'elder' Sisters of whom I have spoken wrote a letter, assuring the public that Miss Jones never had any different fare from that provided for the rest of the Sisters. To show how well qualified she was to make the statement and to contradict the assertions of the lay Sister, she affirmed that she had

charge of providing the food, and consequently must be best informed. I was not a little surprised, for I knew that this lady, though nominally the superintendent of this department, had as little to do with it as I had. I knew also that for two years during which I was intimately acquainted with Miss Jones's Sisterhood, she was not in the same house with Miss Jones for a whole month during the entire time, or for three days consecutively. Hence, unless she had been capable of ubiquity, her assertion was simply valueless.

CHAPTER IX.

MISS JONES'S IDEA OF THE STATE NECESSARY FOR A LADY ABBESS—OCCUPATIONS OF THE SISTERS—A PRINTING PRESS SET UP—OUR UTTER SOLITUDE AND MISERY—A SILENT RECREATION—A SUMMONS FROM OFFICE TO THE SUPERIORESS—THE SISTERS LEFT IN THE ORATORY TILL MIDNIGHT—THE ORATORY INCENSED WHEN MISS JONES ATTENDED THE OFFICE, AND THE SISTERS REQUIRED TO STAND—MISS JONES NEVER WENT TO CHURCH, THOUGH ABLE TO WALK ABOUT AND DRIVE—DR. SMITHSON USED TO SAY THE COMMUNION SERVICE FOR HER ALONE, CONTRARY TO THE RUBRIC AND SEVENTY-FIRST CANON.

My opinion of Miss Jones was, and still is, that she had taken her idea of the duties and state of a Lady Abbess from some Protestant novel, where such persons are always represented as living apart from the Sisters in luxury, governing them with iron rule, and exacting from them the most abject homage. I think, apart from any anxiety about her health, that she liked, and perhaps considered it right, to live in state, to appear at rare intervals, to occupy handsomely furnished apartments, to wear a peculiar costume, and to have costly china and plate for her private use. Later, I heard that she kept a carriage. I believe it was true. I know, at least, that when in Helston she had a carriage, and drove out in it constantly.

It appeared strange to me, and to many, that when she complained so much of ill health, she could make

long journeys frequently with ease, and seemed capable of any exertion except such as would have been required had she lived with the Sisters.

I shall now, however, give some further details of my own life in the Sisterhood, which will probably be the best exemplification of its working.

After I had remained a few months at P——, I was recalled again to B——. Here we were supposed to be living a contemplative life. We were styled Associates, or Companions, or Sisters of the Sacred Heart; but I must again remind the reader that we only gathered vaguely what we were intended to be, and that no kind of instruction whatever, either oral or written, was given to us. A large house was fitted up for the use of three or four Sisters and novices. The mansion occupied by Miss Jones was at no great distance, and at this time she happened to be there. By way of occupation a printing press was set up in our house, and each sister was provided with types, and all the requisites for 'setting up' copy. The expenses must have been something immense; everything was provided on the largest and most costly scale; but Miss Jones seemed never to know the want of money. I was in the house for several months, and I can vouch for the fact that the printing press was never used. I heard afterwards that some book of Dr. Smithson's had been printed there. But I must be pardoned for doubting the statement. A few pages may have been set

up; but I never knew any one work to be carried out steadily and continuously under Miss Jones's rule.

I frequently heard the bell pealing loudly during the night, and on inquiring next day was always informed that the summons was for the lady who had charge of the house, and who was called at these strange hours to a conference with Miss Jones. We remained all day long each in her own apartment. Being delicate, I was allowed a fire, and I must add that it was freely granted. I had not even to ask for it; of course I cleaned my own grate, and brought up my own coals, but at that time I was able to do so, and I wished to attend myself, as every one should do, if possible, in such an Institution. Our fare also, though of the plainest kind, was sufficient. Indeed the sound of the bell for meals and to attend prayers in the Oratory was the only break in a life of fearful monotony—a life which few could have borne for many months without loss of intellect or health. I cannot describe the terrible pressure of these long, lonely, unoccupied hours. Some of the worst horrors imagined by Protestants to exist in a Catholic convent existed here. We never spoke. We had no occupation. We were allowed no books. We had no music; and had it not been that the younger Sisters, utterly unable to bear the dreary and dreadful silence, relieved it by stolen conversations, in which all this was freely criticised and mourned over, I believe Miss Jones

would have peopled the nearest lunatic asylum with many inmates.

On one occasion—it was Ascension day—we were informed by the presiding Sister that 'Mother' had given us permission for an hour's recreation. We were all very much pleased at this prospect of even a brief reunion after months of silence. At the appointed time we assembled in the appointed room—even the 'solitary' appeared. Our tongues were immediately in motion, but a stern glance from the president hushed us into awful stillness once more, and she informed us in low tones that the Lady Superior had only granted permission for a silent recreation. In fact, we sat and looked at each other in silence, instead of sitting and looking in silence at the walls of our respective apartments. We were all heartily glad when the hour had ended, and the experiment was not repeated again.

I remember well how I used to stand or sit at the window for hours, and gaze into the street and across a vast extent of country visible from the eminence on which the house was placed. I looked back upon a sorrowful past; I looked forward to a terrible future. I groaned beneath the agony of present misery. Many and many a time I resolved to return home next morning, but how could I commit what I believed to be a deadly sin? Then it would flash across my mind that a Catholic convent must be so much worse,

for I firmly believed all the tales I had heard of them. What should I do? Whither should I turn? I knew not. The only clergyman to whom I could appeal was Dr. Smithson. I knew what his answer would be. He had already held up to me in glowing colours the danger of 'falling from grace.' He had already represented to me that a Catholic nun was bound for life by her vows. He had lamented almost in bitter tones, as far as he could be bitter, that he had not the power to excommunicate and degrade any one who should turn back. He did not tell me, and it may be he did not know, how different, how entirely different was the life of a nun; and that she could never be subject to the temptations or the miseries which we endured.

We used to go sometimes in the afternoon to hear the service in the cathedral. The distance was considerable; and though I was never obliged to go when actually unable, I often went when far from fit for such an exertion. Still this break in the monotony of our life was worth purchasing even at some cost of after suffering. We said office at home on our return, and thus, as I have said, did double duty in the way of prayers.

One evening in Eastertide—I remember it as if it were yesterday—we were singing Catholic vespers in the oratory soon after our return from Protestant vespers at church. While the magnificat was being recited, the front-door bell was pealed furiously, and we all

knew at once that it was a message from 'Mother.' It seemed to be considered essential that all her messages should be delivered in haste, and even with an impressiveness approaching violence. Her expression, indeed, indicated a rather impatient temper; and those around her knew there would be little excuse, even for a reasonable delay. The lay Sister, of whom I have spoken before, entered the oratory precipitately, and whispered a message to the presiding Sister. She instantly dropped her office book and fled, leaving us without a word of explanation. A noisy clash of the hall door informed us of her exit. We looked aghast from one to the other. The next eldest was the lady mentioned before as reduced to a state of partial idiotcy. No one stirred, no one spoke. At last I sat down on the floor, wearied with standing, and one or two less fervent spirits followed my bad example. Child C—— still remained standing. Half an hour passed; an hour passed; the shades of evening were closing round us. Child C—— succumbed (literally), and laid herself down flat on the ground.

The Sisters at Miss Jones's had a peculiar fashion of praying prostrate, which, though very pleasant when we were tired, seemed to me extremely irreverent. We supposed that Child C—— was absorbed in prayer; but certain heavy breathings issuing from her end of the oratory indicated another occupation. Darkness fell at last. As the weary hours passed, we came close

to each other, and conversed in low tones. Child C—— still slept on. I at least rejoiced that she should enjoy even a temporary oblivion from a life of misery and gloom. It was the rule that we should not leave the oratory until the Sister in charge rang the bell. When nine o'clock struck I determined to remain no longer. The other Sisters, however, seemed rather to enjoy the pleasure of a quiet chat, and the novelty of the adventure. They declared that they would 'see it out.' As I rose to leave the oratory, a peal of thunder roared over our heads, and I speedily changed my determination. It was nearly midnight when the storm ceased. Child C—— had slept through it all. The lay Sister crept up the stairs and opened the door, to be nearer to us. We held whispered conversations with her as to our position and its prospects. She advised us all to go to bed, but said she dared not go herself, as —— might return, and blame her for not waiting up. Soon after the clock struck twelve we were relieved. The Sister returned, pealed the bell loudly—so loudly that even Child C—— was awoke by it. We never heard the cause of this strange event; and the Sister, when I made some remark about it next day, seemed so thoroughly ashamed, that I never alluded to it again.

Poor Miss Jones I heard afterwards was very proud of our wonderful obedience. She little knew how cordially we condemned her in our hearts; but all she

ever seemed to desire was exterior submission to capricious orders. The habitual neglect of office always appeared to me a very serious matter. The reader may not perhaps know that in the Catholic Church, the daily recital of the office, that is, of certain psalms from the Bible, prayers, and hymns, is required as a matter of obligation. All priests are bound to say this office, and all nuns belonging to Contemplative Orders, as well as many of the nuns of Active Orders. I knew nothing of this obligation at the time, but a true sense of religion would suggest that the service of God should be placed before every other consideration. This certainly was not the case at Miss Jones's Sisterhood. I have known the office put off and entirely omitted for the merest trifle. Miss Jones rarely attended at these services. When she did the oratory was incensed; as it was not done at any other time, it must be concluded it was done in her honour. It was also considered, or at least we were told to consider it, a great honour for her to be present. I never could see it in this light. I remember on one occasion, when she had intimated her intention to honour the service by her presence, we were kept waiting nearly an hour before she appeared. I heard next day—indeed, there was no secret made of it—that she could not wait to take her supper until the service was over, and consequently we and the service had to wait for her.

I was very weary long before she made her appear-

ance in state, attended by her maid. The office was matins, which takes fully an hour and a half to recite in choir. We were obliged to stand the entire time Miss Jones was there, as it was not considered respectful to sit in her presence. On this occasion I left the oratory almost fainting, as I was never able at any time to remain long standing. I was informed the next day that I could not be present again when Miss Jones presided. Happily for me I do not think she conferred this favour on her children more than twice during the seven or eight months that I was at B——. Indeed, she never remained in any one place more than two or three weeks at a time; and her absence was not regretted.

Miss Jones never went to church herself. The reason given was her state of health; but as I had said before, this was the excuse for every omission of any distasteful business. Miss Langdon informed me that she once spent a Sunday with her, and that Miss Jones occupied the greater part of the day walking about the garden and grounds; but never even thought of attending Divine Service. When Dr. Smithson was with her he always said the Communion Service with her in her room. On some rare occasions one or two of the elder Sisters were permitted to be present; but, as a general rule, no one was allowed to enter the apartment at those times. The order for the Communion of the Sick in the Book of Common Prayer

expressly requires that three, or two persons at the least, shall communicate with the sick person unless in case of plague.

The 71st Canon is, if possible, still more explicit. 'No minister shall preach or administer the Holy Communion in any private house except it be in times of necessity, when any being either so impotent that he cannot go to the church, or very dangerously sick, are desirous to be partakers of the Holy Sacrament, upon pain of suspension for the first offence, and excommunication for the second.'

It is of course, however, quite possible that this Canon means the reverse of what the ordinary interpretation of the words would convey. At least such seems to be not an unusual mode at present of interpreting articles, homilies, and rubrics. But if it is to be taken in its ordinary sense, Dr. Smithson had incurred the penalty of excommunication a great many times if he had infringed the Canon, and it might be a matter of serious doubt for his penitents whether any of the absolutions he had pronounced over them were valid.

Certainly a lady who could stand for an hour and a half at a time, take long railway journeys constantly, drive about in her carriage frequently, and walk when it suited her convenience to do so, could hardly come under the definition of being either 'impotent' or 'dangerously sick.'

I have been very careful in this work, as far as possible, to avoid mentioning circumstances related to me by others, and to confine myself to a narrative of what came directly under my own observation. Had I adopted the former course, this volume might have been considerably enlarged. There is one subject, however, which I think it right to mention, though I was not personally acquainted with the details. The information, however, was given to me by a friend on whom I can entirely rely. It shows that Miss Jones's 'views' about Communion must have been very different to those of the generality of the High Church party. When she commenced, or rather when she obliged the Sisters to commence, the observance of St. ——'s rule, in all its primitive strictness, with her own severe exactions added thereto, all were obliged, herself of course excepted, to rise at two or three—I am not quite sure which—to say Matins and Lauds. The Sisters who lived in different houses, in the same town, were obliged to walk at this hour from one house to the other, that all might say the office together, in the depth of winter as well as in summer. They were frequently insulted, as might be expected, by drunken men and bad characters. After rising at this early hour, they were not allowed to partake of any food whatever until ten o'clock, and at that hour they dined.

On Sundays they set off to church immediately after

dinner, and received the Sacrament. As Dr. Smithson was so constantly in the house with Miss Jones at this very place, he must have known of this arrangement. Yet Miss Langdon informed me that he was very angry with her several times in Helston for requiring the Sisters to take some slight refreshment before going to an eleven o'clock service, when they were to receive Communion after.

I believe many of the High Church clergy would have been shocked had they known of such an arrangement, and that in a Sisterhood where it might be supposed their views would be carried out.

I do not know what arrangements Miss Jones may have made of late years, but there was certainly little reverence or love shown for religious rites when I was in her establishment.

CHAPTER X.

THE SISTERS WERE NOT ALLOWED TO SEE THEIR RELATIVES, OR TO WRITE TO THEM—I WISH TO LEAVE THE SISTERHOOD, AND AM PERSUADED TO REMAIN—A RAILWAY JOURNEY, AND ARRIVAL AT MIDNIGHT—I AM LEFT ALONE ON THE STEPS OF MISS JONES'S HOUSE, IN A LARGE CITY, AT MIDNIGHT—A DAY AND NIGHT AT A FASHIONABLE HOTEL—MY INDIGNATION AT THIS PROCEEDING—ANOTHER JOURNEY AND ANOTHER RESIDENCE—A COTTAGE IN THE COUNTRY—OUR EMPLOYMENT—MY COMPANION APPOINTED TO TRANSLATE THE OFFICES FROM THE BREVIARY—MISS JONES PASSES OFF THE TRANSLATION AS HER OWN—I AM LEFT ALONE IN THE COTTAGE—ANOTHER JOURNEY TO WESTON MERE—MY BROTHER CALLS WITH HIS BRIDE, AND IS NOT ALLOWED TO SEE ME.

As a general rule, Miss Jones did not allow the Sisters to see their relatives, or to receive letters from them. Some stormy scenes, and many revolts from her authority, occurred in consequence. It was also a rule that if a Sister did write a letter, she should put no address, so that no one should know where she was, and, lest the post-mark should reveal it, all letters were posted at B——. While I was at B—— I once saw a letter directed to me lying at the foot of the stairs. I did not take it, knowing the rule of the house, which I considered a wise one if carried out properly. After a few days had passed, I asked the Sister in charge for the letter, but she positively declared that she never saw it, and I could not get it, or any account of it, from any one. I had long felt

that the silence, the constraint, and above all, the absence of any real religion, was a sufficient motive to justify me in leaving the Sisterhood; but I still hoped for Miss Langden's return from the Crimea, and the restoration of the comparatively happy, regular, and religious life which we had led in Helston Street. I could hear nothing of Miss Langden. Miss Jones's object was to keep us from her, and prevent our reforming our own Sisterhood. Had we done so, what strange tales each of us would have had to tell of our experience under her rule.

I was determined to bear it no longer, and informed the Sister in charge that I would return home immediately. My announcement was met with expostulations and entreaties, and at last I yielded. The next day I was told that I should set out at once with one of the elder Sisters for another house. The object of this arrangement was to prevent my infecting the other Sisters with my discontents, or rather with my determination no longer to endure the absurdities and wrongs dignified with the name of obedience. Probably also Miss Jones thought that a change of scene would help to remove my present impressions. I neither asked nor cared where we were going. The Sister chosen as my companion was one of the elders, and almost the only one who had any real feeling for others; hence I was pleased with the arrangement. When we had entered the railway carriage, I saw at

once that H—— was our destination, as I knew the road well. As usual we were not ordered to set out until late in the afternoon, consequently we did not arrive at our destination till very late at night. We had then a long drive across the city, whither I knew not. On our arrival it was nearly midnight. The Sister dismissed and paid the cabman, and then rang the door bell. The summons was answered in a few minutes, but, to my amazement and dismay, after a long parley with whoever opened the door, my companion informed me that I must wait outside until her return. She went in with the Sister, who shut and bolted the door after her, leaving me on the steps too annoyed and horrified to speak.

I do not think my companion remained inside more than a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes. To me it seemed hours. I had already made up my mind that if she delayed many minutes longer I would watch for a policeman and request him to take me to the house of the nearest Protestant clergyman. I felt assured that no clergyman, however 'high,' would approve such a proceeding. I had no money; and even if I had, I should have been much too terrified to go to an hotel alone. When the Sister appeared, I expressed my indignation in pretty strong language. She informed me that she had orders to go for a night to an hotel in the neighbourhood. We went there, but I was far too wearied and grieved to oppose

any arrangement she chose to make. One of the Sisters would come next morning, she said, and inform us where we were to go—for even A—— did not know our final destination. At least she said so, and I believed her.

The day passed on, and no one arrived. I got indignant and angry again, and surely not without reason. Our strange dress was attracting attention—the hotel was an immense fashionable establishment. Poor A—— got alarmed at last herself, and told me she had not one farthing to pay our bill. We had no work, no books, no occupation of any kind. I threatened more than once to desire the waiter to call a cab, and to go to a clergyman of whom I knew something, and who, though very 'high,' cordially disliked Miss Jones, and would have gladly received any one from her. But I could not bear to leave the poor Sister alone, and she had shown me kindness in many ways which I could not easily forget.

About six o'clock the lady next in rank to Miss Jones arrived, and requested me to leave her alone with A——. I went to the bed-room we had occupied, and on my return she rose up hurriedly, bid me good-bye with great demonstrations of affection, and departed before I had time to say a single word of expostulation.

A—— then assured me that we were ordered to a beautiful cottage near Helston, about twenty minutes

or half an hour's drive by rail; that she and I would be there alone, and I could do what I pleased in every way, and implored me not to leave her. I yielded once more. She had been supplied with ample funds, which as usual were never wanted; the bill was paid, a cab called, and in two hours' time we arrived at the cottage.

It was a beautiful place. The cottage itself was simply such as the poorest peasants occupy, but it was clean and cheerful; quite in the country, and near a very pretty village. My occupation was visiting one or two poor families, work I had always loved. Of A——'s occupation I must write more fully.

I have said that we recited the office, as it is called in the Catholic Church, and that this office had been abolished by the English Protestant Church at the time of the Reformation, when the morning and evening prayer was compiled from it. The preface to the Book of Common Prayer declared one of the reasons for this alteration to be, that the Breviary contained 'uncertain stories and legends, with multitude of responds, verses, vain repetitions, commemorations, and synodals;' and that commonly when any book of the Bible was begun, after three or four chapters were read out, all the rest were unread; another reason was that the Catholic service was in Latin. The preface also declares that this new arrangement is 'more profitable, because here are left out many things, whereof some

are untrue, some are uncertain, some vain and superstitious.'

I shall now proceed to compare the two services, so that the reader may see at a glance the manner in which the Book of Common Prayer was compiled from the Breviary, and the alterations and omissions made therein.

But as so many Protestants are entirely ignorant of Catholic practices of devotion, I must first give a brief explanation. The Breviary must not be confounded with the Missal or Mass Book. The Mass is the great service of the Catholic Church. It is alike the service of the priest and the people. It is an act of sacrifice offered by the priest, and the people assist at that sacrifice, and thereby obtain for themselves a share in its benefits. I am not explaining Catholic doctrine now. I simply wish to explain, for the benefit of those who are large-minded enough to interest themselves in such matters, what Catholics believed before the Reformation, at the time of the Reformation, and ever since the Reformation. In fact, since the night on which, as they believe, our Divine Lord instituted the holy sacrifice of the Mass at the Last Supper, to the present day the sacrifice of the Mass has been the great service of the Catholic Church. It is said in Latin; but it is not in the least necessary that those who assist at this sacrifice should understand the words used. It does not in any way whatever

correspond with the morning or evening prayer of the Protestant Church. When our blessed Saviour was lifted up on the cross on Calvary, there was no need of many words to explain His sacrifice to the loving hearts who knelt around. They knew its object; they knew why He hung there between heaven and earth, and died; they knew, as they looked upon that Sacrifice, and offered It to the Eternal Father for the remission of their sins, that it was the long-promised atonement, and that it should henceforth be the one great centre of Christian worship. The form of words appointed by the Catholic Church to be used at Mass is contained in a book usually called the 'Missal.' The Missal is generally translated into the language of the country, so that the laity who do not understand Latin can read the words if they wish, but it is by no means necessary that they should do so. Each person can use the form of devotion which pleases him most.

Some go to that sacrifice to ask pardon for their sins, and they would wish to use words of earnest self-abasement; others go to that sacrifice to ask for the health of those dear to them, and they would use words of fervent entreaty; others go to that sacrifice to return thanks for favours conferred on them, and they would use words of grateful thanksgiving. All come to Jesus crucified, each in his own fashion, for his own needs, or for the needs of others. Each may use his own words to express his wants or desires.

Hence the peculiar beauty and freedom of Catholic worship. Dissenters complain, and not without some reason, that the form of prayer in the Protestant Prayer Book ties every one down to fixed and unalterable words, which he must use whatever may be his state of mind. In the Catholic Church all are free to pray as they please. Through Christ, and through Christ's atoning sacrifice, they ask for what they need. Each kneels in spirit at the foot of Calvary. But each knows that there is here no mere 'commemoration' of its awful sacrifice; here they find that sacrifice renewed; and in the simple words of the Catholic Catechism, taught to every Catholic child, 'It is the same Christ who once offered Himself a bleeding victim to his heavenly Father upon the cross, who continues to offer Himself in an unbloody manner by the hands of his priests on our altars.' In the words of the Catechism also this sacrifice 'is the first and most necessary act of religion;' and 'it is offered to God by the priest for the living and the dead,' just as the sacrifice of Christ on Calvary was offered for the same purpose.

At the Reformation this great act of Christian worship was abolished, and the Communion Service substituted for it; but lest it should be supposed by any one that the Communion Service was in any way the same as the Mass, most stringent explanations were given to prevent such misconception.

First, it is expressly enjoined that there should be

no celebration of the Lord's Supper, except there be a convenient number to communicate with the priest according to his discretion; and even if there were only twenty persons in the parish of discretion to receive Communion, still it cannot be administered unless four, or three at the least, communicate with the priest. Thus it was evident that the Church of England in no way intended the Protestant Communion Service to take the place of the Mass, for it would be absurd to say that the greatest act of Christian worship was not to be celebrated unless a certain number of persons were present. In fact, it ceased to be a sacrifice, and became a mere service.

Second, this Communion Service is by no means a principal part of the offices of that Church. It is placed significantly at the end of the Book of Common Prayer, as only an occasional service; and though clergymen are required to read prayers daily, yet the saying of the Communion Service is not enjoined, except so far as the rubric which requires every parishioner to receive the Communion three times a year, implies that the Communion Service should be read three times a year. Indeed the framers of the Prayer Book especially contemplated the rare use of this service by saying that on Sundays and holidays the service should end with the blessing, if there was no Communion. In the Catholic Church it is a mortal sin, alike for priests and people, not to hear Mass on Sundays and days of obli-

gation, *because* Mass is the first and most necessary act of religion. The morning and evening prayer obtain this place in the Protestant Church, and are alone enjoined to be constantly said, and are the only services *enjoined* on Sundays.

Third. The thirty-first Article at once explains why the Mass had ceased to be the centre of worship in the English Church, and why it was abolished; for that Article declares that the 'sacrifices of Masses were blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits.'

The Missal, or Mass-book, then, being rejected and condemned, the Breviary, or book containing the prayers said daily by priests, monks and nuns, was taken as the model on which the daily service of the Book of Common Prayer was founded. But it must be remembered that the saying of the prayers in this Breviary had no connection whatsoever with the sacrifice of Mass. The sacrifice of the Mass was for all, for priests and for people also. The recital of the Psalms and prayers in the Breviary was enjoined only on priests and nuns, though many devout persons were in the habit of reciting some portion of these offices daily. It must also be observed, even if a priest said these offices ten times over on Sunday, or any other day on which he was obliged to say Mass, that it would in no way whatever be accepted as a substitute for Mass. In fact, in saying the Breviary he repeated certain prayers; in saying Mass he offered a sacrifice. But the

Protestant Church of England having in her 31st Article condemned "the sacrifices of Masses" as blasphemous, substituted the saying of prayers, and enjoined this only on the clergy; the laity being left altogether free.

I shall now proceed to compare the Breviary and the Book of Common Prayer.

THE BREVIARY.	BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER.
Matins.	*Order for Morning Prayer.*
The Psalms said at matins vary according to the day of the week, and the festival. The hymns and responses also vary, and are suited to the festival or season. I have chosen the Sunday matins for the present comparison, as the main structure is in all cases the same. Sunday at Matins:	'When the wicked man,' &c., and other sentences. Exhortation commencing, 'Dearly beloved brethren.' General Confession. Absolution, which is merely a prayer according to the rubric, and the sense, to which all answer, Amen.
Pater noster (Our Father). Ave Maria (Hail Mary).	Our Father.
Responses.	*Responses.*
℣. Domine, labia mea aperies.	O Lord, open thou our lips.
℟. Et os meum annuntiabit laudem tuam.	And our mouth shall show forth thy praise.
℣. Deus, in adjutorium meum intende.	O God, make speed to save us.
℟. Domine, ad adjuvandum me festina.	O Lord, make haste to help us.
℣. Gloria Patri, &c. Alleluia,	Glory be to the Father, &c. Praise ye the Lord.

Here there is a slight addition in the Catholic office which is as follows, (omitted in the Protestant).

Inv.: Let us worship the Lord who hath made us. Then, *Venite, exultemus*, &c. The Invitatory, or words translated above, are repeated at certain intervals.

Then follows a hymn suitable to the season, and then the Psalms for Sundays: Ps. i. *Beatus vir*; Ps. ii. *Quare fremuerunt*; Ps. iii. *Domine, quid*; Ps. vi. *Domine, ne in furore.* Then follows the antiphon, Serve the Lord with fear, &c.; and then Psalms and antiphons are continued, up to Ps. xx. inclusive, after which the *Pater noster* is said.

Then the lessons follow, varying according to the season. The lessons for the autumn quarter, commencing with the first Sunday in September, are Job i., followed by lessons from the works of St. Gregory, Pope.

At the conclusion of these lessons the *Te Deum* is said. In penitential seasons this

The Lord's name be praised.

The Protestant version is an exact translation from the Catholic (given opposite), except the use of the singular in the latter.

Venite, exultemus, O come, let us sing, &c.

Then follow the Psalms: those for the first day of the month are: Ps. i. *Beatus vir*; Ps. ii. *Quare fremuerunt*; Ps. iii. *Domine, quid*; Ps. iv. *Cum invocarem*; Ps. v. *Verba mea.*

The lessons follow, being a chapter from the Old Testament and a chapter from the New Testament. The lessons for the 1st of September are Hosea xiv. and Matt. ii.

At the conclusion of the first lesson, the *Te Deum* is said, or the canticle *Benedi-*

hymn of joy is omitted; for instance, it is not said now (during Lent), the time in which this is being written.

cite, O all ye works of the Lord. There is no direction whatever given as to which shall be said; the clergyman may take his choice. Hence High Church clergymen omit the *Te Deum* in penitential seasons, in imitation of Catholics; Low Church clergymen say the *Te Deum* even on Good Friday.

Lauds is said next. This service is properly a continuation of matins. Lauds commences with *Deus, in adjutorium*, &c., and the following Psalms are said on Sundays always. Ps. xcii., Ps. xcix., Ps. lxii., Ps. lxvi.; then the Canticle of the Three Children, *Benedicite, omnia opera*, &c. Ps. cxlviii., cxlix., cl.; then a short verse or text from the Bible, a hymn suitable to the season, and the *Benedictus*.

Some short collects then follow, and all ends with an antiphon to the Blessed Virgin, mother of God.

The second lesson then follows, and none of the Psalms of Lauds are said, except the *Benedictus*, which is repeated after the second lesson.

Then follow the Creed, Our Father, versicles and collects.

The evening service has been made up also from the Catholic vespers. Hence the reader will perceive that

I was correct in saying that we did double duty in the way of prayers.

I must now return to the circumstance which led me into this digression. When Puseyite clergymen, or, if you will, High Church clergymen, began to look backwards to Rome, from whence they had been so rudely severed, the very beautiful office of which the Reformers had deprived them was one of their great attractions. The cold and bare service commencing with 'Dearly beloved brethren,' looked what in truth it was, very puritanical. Hence many efforts were made to introduce the Catholic Breviary. Many little compilations from it were made up and distributed privately amongst the followers of the leaders of the party; and strangely enough, though the great majority of Protestant clergymen complained that they could not get time to read the very short abridgment of matins and lauds provided for their use by their Church, the High Church parson found time to read it in church, and to repeat it over again at home with its original extensions.

The Sisters in Sisterhoods were at least expected to imitate the Catholic nun in this also. Miss Jones found herself in a difficulty. She did not know one single word of Latin, and indeed was very deficient in education, but she had not the honesty to say so. One of the Sisters, however, had studied Latin, and knew it thoroughly, and to her Miss Jones confided

the task of translating the Breviary for the use of the Sisters. This lady was strictly charged to accomplish her work in private; not to allow any one to see her manuscript, above all to keep the Catholic Breviary from which she translated carefully concealed. All these directions she obeyed scrupulously. But when we arrived at our country cottage, she informed me, with many injunctions to secrecy, that it was to complete her task she was sent thither. She despatched the manuscript, as she translated it, to Miss Jones; and Miss Jones—I feel almost ashamed for the sake of womanhood to say it—copied off what this lady had written on slips of parchment, and sent them to be copied again by the Sisters into their manuscript books provided for the purpose, as if they had been her own translation.

This I know to be true. I had seen, and copied from, the parchment slips many times; and had always been told that the 'Lady Superior' was translating and 'adapting' the Breviary for her spiritual children. Thus the Breviary had been Protestantised for the Protestant Church; it was now being altered and adapted again by a lady for these Protestant Sisters. I believe, however, Miss Jones cared as little about her adaptation as she did about the daily service of her Church; for although I had seen slips of hers handed about for more than a year, little progress was made. I fancy Miss Jones found other occupation

more congenial to her than copying the offices, and I heard even one of the elder Sisters express great annoyance at the delay once, as she said that it would be years, if she was so slow, before we had the office fully copied out.

After we had been about a fortnight at W——, a cab arrived at the door one day, and a messenger from the nearest telegraph office delivered a telegram to my companion. It proved to be a summons from Miss Jones requiring her immediate attention at Helston. Of course the order could have been sent quite as well by letter, but that would have been entirely too commonplace a mode of proceeding for such a distinguished person. I suppose each of Miss Jones's messages could not have cost less than thirty shillings or two pounds, and she generally sent several in the day. How many poor families might have been fed and clothed if all this money so recklessly wasted had been applied to that purpose.

The Sister seemed delighted. Indeed I believe the constant excitement in which Miss Jones kept all the Sisters by telegraph messages, railway journeys, and incessant change of place and occupation, helped to keep them from realising their position, and thinking seriously of their future.

I have said the Sister was delighted, but I certainly was not. She informed me that I was to remain alone in the cottage until her return, and I informed her

that I would not do so. I was not by any means strong-minded in the sense necessary to endure such an ordeal, and I again repeated, what I found an unfailing resource in such difficulties, that I would go to the nearest clergyman and place myself under his protection if I was left alone.

The Sister was greatly perplexed. She assured me that Miss Jones often left young Sisters alone in the cottage for weeks; but I continued resolute. At last she consented to allow an old woman whom we had employed for rough work to remain with me until her return. She then set off, and left me to my own not very pleasant reflections.

The next day I was startled to see a gentleman riding up to the door, attended by a groom and accompanied by two fine noble-looking lads of eight or ten. He dismounted and tapped at the wooden gate. When I opened it, he entered alone, and addressing me in the kindest manner, expostulated with me for remaining by myself in such a place. He told me he had heard from his wife that I was left in the cottage, and that she, he grieved to say, was infatuated by Miss Jones, and was constantly summoned to her, away from him and her children. I knew who the gentleman was —knew that his family were wealthy, and had heard Mrs. Waters frequently spoken of as one of 'Mother's dearest children,' and the great support of her Sisterhood. How I wished this good and kind lady could

have known the real truth, and the way in which her benevolence was wasted. But I felt sure, from all I had heard of her almost fanatical worship of Miss Jones, that it would be hard to open her eyes, and I did not feel called on to make the attempt.

Mr. Waters evidently saw through the whole affair, and I sincerely pitied him. But the victim was fascinated beyond recall, as the purest and simplest are often fascinated by wily and insinuating flatterers. Mr. Waters seemed anxious at least to rescue me. He offered to send his carriage for me at once, and assured me if I would come to his house I should have a room to myself until my companion returned, and that no one should be allowed to intrude on me. I could not but feel his kindness, and he pressed me again and again to accept his offer. I declined, for had I chosen to leave I could at once have returned home, and need not have been indebted to the hospitality of a stranger.

The next day my companion returned, and informed me that we were at once to set out for P——, a long and weary journey. I was to live in the same house with my companion, who had charge of the boys' college, and assist her. She usually, I believe, slept in the house alone. I liked the work, though I always felt that it was utterly unsuited for women. It was argued, however, that it succeeded, and that this was a sufficient reason for its continuance. I could not take this view of the case. At any moment it might fail,

and fail terribly. Who could tell how long one woman, however efficient, could control twenty boys from eleven to sixteen years of age? and who could tell, if an outbreak occurred, what would be its results? Were there not hundreds of poor orphan girls needing care and training far more than boys? and would not such work be far more suitable for women, and a far greater act of charity?

I cannot tell exactly when or how I first began to connect all the evils of Miss Jones's system with the form of belief which I then held; but I know it was about this time I became seriously uneasy on the subject. Still I did not know a single Catholic, I had never read any Catholic books except those 'adapted' by Dr. Pusey, and I feared that all the evils which existed in Miss Jones's establishment must exist still more painfully in a Catholic convent. I had also very strong feelings against devotion to the Blessed Virgin; and any Puseyite clergyman with whom I had conversed before my entrance into the Sisterhood had taken care to deepen these impressions as much as possible.

I thought a great deal at this time, and I prayed a great deal. The absurdity of Miss Jones's system made itself more and more manifest, and I could not help asking myself why we should copy so much from Catholics if the Catholic religion was so very wrong, and why, if it was not wrong, should there have been a Reformation.

Some new specialities of Miss Jones's system also presented themselves to me. She had built a small portion of what was intended to be an immense conventual establishment, and I noticed with pain that the splendid apartments intended for her own use were the first to be erected. It seemed to me that it would have been more suitable to have built the church first. I found here three or four Sisters also, and they seemed most careless and irregular about attending daily prayers. I found a great deal of talk about work, and no real work done. I felt more and more, with the greatest pain, that we were utterly severed from the clergy. We could neither write to a clergyman nor see one, and yet we were leading a life which, above all others, would have required help and direction. In truth, as regarded this we all found that we were far worse off than when in our own homes. Yet many had entered the Sisterhood for the sake of having greater spiritual privileges.

I was, on the whole, however, comparatively happy. I liked the boys; they were cheerful companions, and easily managed. There was a tolerably fair library for their use, though I do not think one of them ever got a single book out of it. It was, like many other things, for show. When the boys were out with the master, who took them long country walks, I sometimes got a quiet hour's reading. One day I found a volume of Wordsworth's poems, and happened to open at that

beautiful passage in which he speaks of the Mother of God, as

Our tainted nature's solitary boast.

I pondered long and deeply on the words. Even at that time High Churchmen had begun to think it advisable to pray to their guardian angels. The thought flashed across my mind, that surely if they could hear and help us, how much more powerful must be the help of the Mother of Jesus. Could it then be so wrong to pray to her? I would willingly ask the prayers of any good person in this world; and if our desires could be known at all to departed spirits, who was so good, so pure, and therefore so likely to be heard as Mary, the Mother of Jesus? And then I prayed, prayed with the voiceless words of my heart, prayed, I fear, rather with petulance than with humble supplication, that if she could hear me, and did hear me, she would obtain for me a clear answer to that awful question—What is truth?

I think it was soon after this that I heard from my brother of his approaching marriage. He wished very much that I should return home at least for the ceremony, but I still felt I could not leave the Sisterhood. He and his bride came at once to Weston Mere. As he knew something of Miss Jones's mode of proceeding by this time, he wrote to her to say he was coming, and that he insisted on seeing his sister. Miss Jones took no notice of his letter; it was her usual course

when placed in any difficulty. My brother was determined at least that I should know he was at Weston Mere, and he called at the Sisterhood and asked for me. He was refused admission on the usual plea, that Miss Jones was not there, and none of the Sisters could see their friends unless she was in the house. He went away indignant and grieved, declaring that bad as Catholic convents were, he was certain they would not be guilty of such absurdities and injustice. I never heard of his visit until after his departure.

Still I remained. I am naturally, I believe, of rather an adhesive character, if I may use the term, and I was very unwilling to take the decided step of leaving the Sisterhood. I knew Miss Jones had my late home in Helston Street under her entire control, and that it would be useless to go there—in fact, I would not go now without her permission. I had no choice except to return to the world if I left her; and I had now severed myself from home and home ties for so long, that I dreaded to make so great a change. I thought of applying to Clewer, and asking admission there; but even if I were received there, how could I bear a 'lower life,' as I had been taught to consider it?

CHAPTER XI.

THE BOYS' COLLEGE—A BOY FLOGGED, AND A SISTER OBLIGED TO BE PRESENT—I AM LEFT ALONE IN THE HOUSE WITH THE BOYS AND A MAN, WITHOUT A SINGLE FEMALE COMPANION—I DETERMINE TO LEAVE MISS JONES AND RETURN HOME—MY POSITION AT HOME IS VERY PAINFUL—REASONS FOR THIS—CHANGES OCCUR IN EVERY FAMILY WHICH ARE FELT BY THOSE WHO RETURN AFTER TEMPORARY ABSENCE—I AM BLAMED FOR NOT EXERCISING MY OWN JUDGMENT, AND CONDEMNED IF I EXERCISE IT—I RETURN TO MISS JONES—REASON FOR DOING SO—I BEGIN TO ASK SERIOUSLY AND PRAYERFULLY, WHAT IS TRUTH—I COMPARE THE BIBLE AND PRAYER-BOOK.

My future was settled sooner than I expected. I have said that the boys were on the whole manageable, but there were exceptions, and although they rarely rebelled against the Sister in charge, when playing they had their quarrels, as might be expected. They were, for the most part, 'roughs,' and found blows the readiest way of settling a dispute. On one occasion two of the eldest boys had a tremendous quarrel while they were out with their master; a terrible black eye was the result, and when they came home and the matter was reported to the Sister in charge of the college, she decided calmly, and to my agony and horror, that the boy whom she considered the aggressor should be flogged by the

master next morning. I cannot tell what I suffered that day: to add to all, I discovered it was by no means an uncommon occurrence, and that the Sister presided. She assured me she felt it dreadfully at first, but Miss Jones insisted on her being present on such occasions. I knew too well Miss Jones's cruel arbitrariness and indifference to the feelings of others to say another word. She asked why I should care when I need not be there, and took the whole affair as a matter of course; the boys, she said, were used to a touch of the rope's end.

I had always very strong feelings on this subject myself. I know many gentlemen who attribute the reckless indifference to human suffering often manifested by men in the highest ranks of life (as in the suppression of the insurrection in Jamaica) to the treatment they had received at public schools, and to the hardness created and fostered by the systematic cruelty of the bigger boy to the younger. But all this was apart from the present question. I felt, and I believe any man who has the least reverence for the name of woman, would feel, that this was no scene for a woman to witness or preside over.

The flogging was to take place next morning. About five o'clock in the afternoon of that eventful day the Sister received a summons, in the usual fashion, to attend Miss Jones at B———, nearly a day's

journey, and she informed me that I was to have sole charge of the boys during her absence. As a great favour, the man who took the boys to walk was to be allowed to sleep in the house. I entreated that a woman, any woman, might be allowed to stay with me, but my entreaties were in vain. I had no fear of not being able to manage the boys. They all liked me, and I never had a rude word or look from one of them. As long as I had a female companion, I did not think much of the strange position we were in as the sole guardians of so many boys, some of them almost young men. Once, again, I was stunned and bewildered, and knew not what to do.

Next morning I hid myself where I could not hear the poor fellow's screams; no power on earth could have induced me to witness the scene. Even now it is agony to me to recall and to write of the circumstance, and only the sternest sense of duty compels me to do it. The Sister left immediately after, but not without expressing some regret for the position in which I was placed, and hoping the boys would not give me any trouble. I went to them at once. The poor lad was sobbing violently; but he knew well I felt for him, for my impression at the time was that he had been most unjustly treated. He was a fine good-tempered fellow, about, I think, sixteen; his accuser was a tall sinister-looking lad, something about the same age; he had got

no injury in the fray of the day before, but the lad who was punished came home with a black eye.

The master, whom I always disliked, came after breakfast and took the boys out for a long walk into the country. I was left alone in the house, and was truly thankful for solitude. During those lonely hours I made up my mind decidedly to leave Miss Jones's establishment. The next day I found the Sister did not return. I knew where she had gone, I knew that Miss Jones might keep her for weeks, if she took it into her head, and leave me alone with the boys, and, what I felt more, with this strange man of whom I knew nothing. I wrote to the Sister, for I knew Miss Jones would pretend she had not got my letter if I wrote to her, and requested her to inform Miss Jones that I had made up my mind to leave her Sisterhood, adding that if the Sister did not return in two days after the receipt of my letter, I would leave the house.

I believe Miss Jones was not a little annoyed at my determination. However, she made no sign, probably fearing that I would make a thorough exposure of the whole affair.

The Sister returned at the time I had named. In the meanwhile I had written home, and requested that a confidential servant, who had lived with us for many years, might be sent to Weston Mere for me, as I felt utterly unequal to travel alone. As I knew that an

aged relative was very dependent on her services, I added, that if the lady's maid could not be easily spared, I would get a young girl to accompany me. I desired the reply to my letter, and some money, to be sent to me by a carrier, with special directions that he should deliver the parcel into my own hands. I received an immediate reply. The carrier was faithful to his charge, and absolutely refused to give the parcel confided to him to any one except 'the lady herself.' I found my aged relative could not spare her maid, or rather the girl wrote to me herself to say she thought it would not be right for her to leave home unless I absolutely required her. I at once engaged a young person who had been in the habit of working for the boys. She accompanied me home, and returned the next day to her family at Weston Mere.

My position now was a very painful one. My father and mother both died during the time I had been in the Sisterhood. There still remained, in what I called home, an aged relative, a lady possessed of considerable property. I was her godchild, and it was always supposed and expected that she would leave me all that she could dispose of by will; a considerable part of her annual income was under settlement to distant relations. I have been anxious to avoid entering on my own personal history, except in so far as it is immediately connected with my residence in a Sisterhood. Had I wished to do so, I believe I could have

engaged the deepest interest and sympathy of my readers by relating it; but this is not my object. It is necessary, however, that I should briefly explain some family matters here, or the remainder of my narrative could not be understood.

I shall call this relative Mrs. Grace, as, for obvious reasons, I have given fictitious names to real persons in my autobiography. She was far advanced in years, of more than ordinary intelligence, and had a most generous and loving heart. When she found that I was determined to persevere in the Sisterhood, she sent for two elderly ladies, relatives of hers, and of mine also, that they might live with her. Mrs. Grace was nominally a member of the Church of England, but, like many other persons who hold what are called evangelical views, she considered it by no means essential to exclude Dissenters from the catalogue of her friends. She went to the Protestant church, the Dissenting chapel, or the meeting-house of the Plymouth Brethren, as she felt inclined. Her charities were boundless and freely bestowed on all, hence she was very popular with clergymen of all denominations. She had an estate in Ireland which she never had visited, but she considered it her duty to pay a Scripture reader to preach to her tenants. I never heard that he effected a single conversion, but I know that his salary was paid punctually.

The two ladies who lived with her were also evan-

gelical in their views, and they had not the natural amiability of character which distinguished my relative. They were Irish. Their father had managed to run through a large property, and to leave only debt and disgrace to his children. This may have helped to embitter their feelings, and, though they were not altogether destitute, Mrs. Grace's property was a tempting consideration, and it was worth their while to make some sacrifices and some efforts to obtain what she was free to will. I was the only obstacle; hence their reception of me was not very cordial, and their disappointment at my unexpected return was plainly manifest.

I had anticipated this, but I scarcely anticipated all the petty persecutions which I now had to endure. I cannot write more about it. The subject is too painful. If these ladies had not been relatives, I could have borne it better. If they had not cloaked their persecution under the mask of religion, it would not have been so hard to endure.

Still, I must try to make the reader understand the position in which I was placed, that he may see why leaving a Sisterhood is not always the immediate resource of those who find a Sister's life very different to what they expected it to be. When a person has been absent even for a year from the family circle, changes occur. When the absence is still more prolonged, the changes increase in proportion. When home ties are once

broken, and when the individual who breaks them appears to have the intention of severing herself entirely from the family, she ceases to be regarded as one of its members. When the other members of the household find that they are severed from her, not only by a considerable distance, but also by a great change in her life, even the most attached cool insensibly in their affection. If the severed member also ceases to correspond with those once dearest to her, and they know nothing of her occupations and interests, the breach becomes wider and wider as months pass on. If this severance continues for several years, she returns not to the old home, but to a new phase of existence, in which more or less she is a stranger.

But add to all this what is the rule and not the exception in such cases. The Sister has left the family in direct opposition to the wishes of her friends, and this opposition has been caused by differences on religious subjects, and then you have some idea of her position. I very much doubt if there was a single individual in Miss Jones's Sisterhood who had the full and free consent of her relatives for leaving home. I do not mean to say that a lady who had attained her majority was not free, morally as well as legally, to act without this consent. I merely wish to explain the position in which most of us were placed, and why many lived on in misery at Miss Jones's in preference

to returning home to another kind of misery which might be almost as hard to bear.

I soon found this to be the case. I believe, nay, I am sure, that no mother ever loved a child more tenderly than this aged relative loved me. My own poor mother never loved me as she did, and yet I found that a difference of opinion, which I never put forward, on religious matters had deprived me of not a little of that tenderness which was once my greatest earthly happiness.

Dissenting ministers came to the house, and assured me I was on the high road to Popery, and, as a necessary consequence, to hell. A sister of the clergyman whom I have mentioned before as having got into difficulties with an examining chaplain about the time of the Gorham case, was a constant visitor. She was also the widow of a clergyman; and she kept poor Mrs. Grace in a constant fever with tales of the Inquisition, of the idolatries practised in Rome, of the evil deeds of foreign priests, of the fascinations of the Jesuits—the poor Jesuits, the scapegoats of every enormity. Then Mrs. Grace had prayer-meetings in her drawing-room, and an old Indian officer, Colonel ——, one of the Plymouth Brethren, prayed long and fervently for my conversion. The duty of reading the Bible for myself, which I was assured I did *not* do, despite my most solemn assurances to the contrary, was incessantly impressed on me. The duty of judging for myself, which I was also assured I did not do, notwithstanding my equally earnest assurances that

no one else judged for me, was hourly instilled into me. If I attended daily prayers at the nearest church where daily prayers were read, I was told I was in bondage to 'legal observances.' If I abstained from meat on Fridays, as Puseyites had then begun to do, it was superstitious.

All this was said and done in good faith, and for the most part intended kindly, but it did not make it the less painful to me. It never seemed to occur to anyone that I had a right to exercise any private judgment; that where there were so many varieties of opinion, even on the most serious subjects, I, at least, might have a view of my own. Liberty of conscience, freedom from the slavery of Popery, and from Puseyism as the child of Popery, was the one cry. It did not occur to these good people that they were not allowing *me* liberty of conscience; that the only liberty of conscience they allowed was to agree with themselves. Why should I be tied to their opinions or their belief? On their own grounds, on the very principles of the Reformation, on which the English Church is founded, every one has a right to exercise his own judgment and follow out his own convictions as to his religious belief. The slightest interference in such matters is simply a denial of the right to exercise liberty of conscience; yet, strange to say, I found those who were foremost in arguing for liberty of conscience as a principle were the last to recognize its existence as a practice. No man has a

logical right to deny liberty of conscience to another unless he can prove that his own faith is infallible.

I found the difficulties of my position were not likely to decrease. The two ladies, I fear, allowed their religious zeal to be influenced by other motives, and were proportionately bitter. I saw that my beloved and aged relative was fearfully disturbed by all this argument in every way uncongenial to her disposition. Can any wonder that I thought once more of returning to Miss Jones's establishment, and facing all its horrors anew? I wanted some time for reflection. I had begun to ask myself, Was this Babel of religious opinion, in which few seemed to agree on any one subject, except their hatred of Popery, the religion which the Son of God had come to teach the world? Was it possible that He who died for us had left us no other guide as to what we should believe, except the words of a book which was interpreted to teach the most opposite doctrines? Common sense suggested that it could not be so. Reason suggested that it could not be so. Would He who had done the greater in dying for us, fail to do the lesser in teaching us what we should do to benefit by His death? Affection suggested the contrary. Had a God of love left His last testament to be a source of discord instead of a declaration of His will? Then I turned Romewards, and I asked myself, Could it be that this Church, which ever and everywhere taught the same doctrine, was in truth the custodian of this testament,

and the lawful judge appointed to interpret it? But Protestant prejudice and Protestant ignorance were strong within me still. The prejudice was the fruit of ignorance, and the ignorance was not yet enlightened.

About this time a friend of mine, who had been received into the Catholic Church a few years before, came to F——. I had some conversation with her, but she did not convince me that she was right. Still, she suggested many things which I thought over very carefully afterwards, and she assured me that Miss Jones's mode of carrying out a Sisterhood was a parody on the religious life as practised in the Catholic Church.

I now made up my mind to go to Helston to see Dr. Smithson, and to ask his advice. He was, as usual, kind and considerate, still I felt he was not what he used to be. I attributed the change, I believe justly, partly to Miss Jones's influence, under which he was rapidly changing, and partly to his anger at my having left her, and at my thinking it even possible that Rome might be safer than Canterbury. I found that, in his own way, he was quite as bitter against Catholics as my friends the Dissenting ministers, and quite as full of stories against Catholic practices, with more than hints that Rome was an apostate church. He could not deny that it had Apostolic succession. His opinion and his influence were not easily resisted. I had heard Protestants say, again and again, that he was a Jesuit in disguise, an emissary of the Pope; that he secretly enticed people to

Rome, while he openly spoke against it. I had heard this also of other High Church clergymen. I knew it to be utterly false, and that the very reverse was true; yet no words of mine could alter the opinions of those who were determined to believe what suited them. This was a lesson to me of the utter uselessness of fighting against prejudice, and I have had many an example since.

Miss Jones received me again as a visitor, which was precisely what I wished. I had a brief interview with her, during which she treated me with the haughtiest disdain, and without manifesting one trace of the love of a mother receiving again an erring child, which might have been supposed to be my position in her view of the case. I felt, however, that she was doing me an act of kindness, though I knew she was far from intending it as such. I was not allowed to join the Sisters in my old home, as I had hoped. Miss Jones, as usual, had several houses in the same place, and to one of these I was sent. I found, to my dismay, on arriving at my destination, that I was to endure something very like solitary confinement. The Sister in charge was desired not to have any intercourse with me. I was to take my meals in the very small room in which I slept and lived. No office was said; and I only left it to go to church when able, and to visit the poor. The loneliness was very painful. The absolute exclusion

from every kind of exchange of sentiment with others was more oppressive than would be believed by those who have not experienced a like trial. Still, I had endured so much lately from unpleasant interest in my opinions that I could better bear this solitude. I went almost daily to visit the poor. The Sister sent me a note each morning with directions whom to visit, and supplied me with the relief for each.

The convent friend whom I have already mentioned, had strongly impressed on me the necessity of prayer. She was a person of very clear judgment, and argued thus: You believe that God hears and answers prayer. You are unsettled and perplexed in your religious belief. You know that God is truth; if you pray to Him to teach you what is true, He cannot fail to do so. Divest your mind as far as possible of all preconceived prejudices or feelings; only ask that He will teach you what is truth, what He Himself wills that you should believe. If you ask Him for a fish, He will not give you a serpent. If the Catholic Faith is not the true faith, He will not lead you to it; if it is, you may believe that your way will be made plainer day by day.

I acted on this advice. While I was with Miss Langdon, at Helston, she soon ascertained that I had read a great deal more than most girls of my age, and that my reading had been solid. She was herself very highly educated, and she offered to teach

me Latin at any spare times we could both get. I was most grateful for the proposal. She had copies of the two very beautiful Latin hymns, *Veni Sancte Spiritus* and *Veni Creator*. I learned these hymns, and they have been to me a life-long treasure. I now said them daily that the Spirit of Truth might teach me Himself what He would have me know, and what He would have me do. At the same time I resolved, in my solitary hours, to begin a very careful examination of the Bible and the Prayer Book. First, I intended to ascertain for myself what the Prayer Book taught, as the best guide to what the Protestant Church taught; next, I intended to see if what it taught agreed with the Bible.

I began with the Articles. I knew every clergyman was bound to sign them, and to declare thereby, that he accepted them as the teaching of the Church of England as understood in their literal and grammatical sense. A High Church clergyman had once tried to persuade me that the laity had nothing to do with the Articles; but if the clergy were to teach the laity the faith or form of belief contained in these Articles, I could not see how we could be freed from them. Yet I knew this argument to have been used by many. How could the clergy have a different conscience and a different belief from us?

What I wished to ascertain first was, Did our

Divine Lord institute a Church with authority to teach? The next question would be, Where was that Church to be found? It seemed to me that the whole controversy between Dissenters, Evangelicals, High Churchmen, and Rome, was involved in this one question, and could be determined in the main by an answer to it. If our Lord had instituted a Church, unquestionably it must be the only sure way of salvation. If He had not instituted a Church, all these varying sects and creeds might be partially right and partially wrong; and I could only use my own private judgment to find out which contained, in my opinion, the least error and the most truth. Yet I had by no means such an opinion of my own judgment as to make me suppose that my decision on such a momentous question would be wiser than that of others. Yet, if I elected to give up my own private judgment to the opinion of any other person, there was still an exercise of private judgment in the choice itself. I looked for those passages in the Bible which I knew so well, and pondered long and deeply on them. It seemed to me that our Divine Lord had done just—be it said with reverence—what we might have reasonably expected. Before He left the world and ascended to His Father, He appointed certain persons to continue His work, and invested them with authority to do so. As one possessing absolute authority, He

had also power to delegate that authority; and it appeared to me clear that He had done so. No words could be plainer than those in the Gospel of St. Matthew, chap. 16, in which Peter is informed by Christ Himself, that He has built His Church upon him, and that the gates of hell should not prevail against it. No words could be plainer than those of our Saviour Himself, in which, after His resurrection, He desired the chosen eleven to go into the world and preach the Gospel to every creature, St. Mark, chap. 16. Surely, I thought, if Jesus sent them forth to preach, endowed with this awful commission to retain and remit sin, and that the sentence they uttered on earth should be ratified in Heaven, surely there could be no doubt, no uncertainty, about what they were to teach. St. Paul, for example, would not teach that Baptism 'was a sign of regeneration' (Article 27), and St. Peter that it 'was a Sacrament which cleanses from original sin, and which also remits the actual sins committed before it.' St. James would not teach that the 'Sacrifices of Masses were blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits' (Article 31); and St. Peter, that the Mass was '*the* Sacrifice of the New Law' (Catholic Catechism). St. Matthew would not affirm that 'Transubstantiation could not be proved by Holy Writ, was repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, and had occasioned many superstitions' (Article 28); and St. John, that

'at the consecration the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ' (Catholic Catechism).

Still, I knew there was another side to this question, or rather two other sides. I had been brought up, I might say, in a very din of controversy, in which every article of faith was disputed by one party or the other, all claiming the Scriptures as their guide—a few, but very few, claiming the Church as an authority. I knew the Dissenters would argue that the Apostles were poor fallible men like ourselves, not endowed with any special authority or commission to teach. Some would, perhaps, allow the Apostles might have had some authority, but would say that it ended with them. I had often heard this argument used. But it seemed to me the plain words of Scripture were clearly against it, 'Lo, I am with you always,' and that it would be terrible injustice to leave us to find out our own way to Heaven, to guess what we were or were not to believe. Then I considered the High Church views. That for me was really the formidable question; yet the more I thought the simpler the matter seemed to be. The Articles were to the Protestant Church what the Creed of Pope Pius was to the Catholic Church. I read over the 19th Article many times, and very carefully. It says: 'The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly ministered

according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same. As the Church of *Jerusalem*, *Alexandria*, and *Antioch* have erred; so also the Church of *Rome* hath erred, not only in their living and manner of Ceremonies, but also in matters of Faith.' The Article is divided into two parts. The first part defines what the Church is, the second part defines what the Church is not. The definition of the Church might be adopted as it stands by any body of Dissenters. *They* consider the visible Church to be a congregation of faithful men ; all true believers is the term they generally use, and the terms are convertible. They argue that, wherever the pure Word of God is preached, there is the Church ; and they also administer the Sacraments according to what they believe to be Christ's ordinance. Still, the question remained, What did Christ ordain about the Sacraments? The Church of England said that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshipped. The Catholic Church reserved It, and worshipped It. Which was Scriptural? for both claimed Scripture as its authority.

The second part of the Article, which defines what the Church is not, was a necessary sequence of the former part. The Church was not infallible. It had erred not only in 'living and manner of ceremonies, but also in matters of faith.' Who, then, could give

an answer to the question, What is truth? If Rome had erred in matters of faith—Rome which even the High Churchman strove to copy so closely, Rome from which he took the model of all his new practice of piety—what security had I that the Church of England had not erred also? And once admit that the Church has erred, the whole groundwork of it will give way beneath your feet, and you are precipitated into a chaos of error.

As I have said, I had lived in an atmosphere of controversy, and I knew well the High Church reply to this terrible Article. It was said to me, when I adduced it as a proof that the Church had erred, that the Article did not say the Church of England had erred. But I answered, if particular churches may err, then may not the Church of England err? Unless it is the one infallible Church which has never erred, how can you be sure that it has not erred, and that it may not err still further? Then it was said that the Universal Church had never erred. But this was begging the question. Where was the Universal Church which had never erred? I for my part wished to know, and to become a member of it with as little delay as possible. If England was partly right, Rome partly right, the Greek Church partly right, and out of all these partlies there was made up a wholly right Church, who was to decide what was right and what was wrong in each of these Churches? Whoever decided

certainly claimed infallibility for himself. If there was no one visible authority to teach, where were Christ's promises to His Church? Surely, when He said He would be with it to the end of the world, He did not mean that He would be with it invisibly—with it partly in one place, and partly in another, in such a fashion that no one could see where His truth really existed.

This was simply the argument of the Dissenter. With him it was very logical. He said Christ had not instituted a visible Church; that the faithful everywhere who believed in 'essentials' were the Church, and that each one should judge for himself what were, and what were not, essentials. The High Church argument was very similar. There was a general creed made up, somewhere and somehow, out of the errors of various particular churches. The Dissenter said there was no Apostolic succession, and there were no priests; and the High Churchman said there was an Apostolic succession, only it had failed to teach Apostolic truth, and had fallen into error 'in matters of faith.' And there were priests, but until very lately High Churchmen had not discovered that they were appointed to offer sacrifice. Surely, if any one Church had fallen into error in matters of faith, it had failed in one of the most important points of Apostolic succession, and had ceased to have authority to *teach*.

So much for theory. If I have not expressed myself

very clearly, at least I have tried to make the reader understand what passed through my mind at this time. I was still far from thinking that the Catholic Church was the one true Church, which possessed both Apostolic succession and Apostolic authority to teach. A circumstance now occurred which led me to take a practical view of the matter.

I suppose even the highest churchman of the present day will admit that, thirty years ago, any clergyman of the Church of England who attempted to show any exterior reverence to the Lord's Supper in the Protestant Church would have met with universal reprobation. Even at the present day, those who hold anything like Catholic doctrine are a small minority; but if any of this small minority believes in the Sacrifice of the Mass, or in Transubstantiation, he simply ceases to be a believer in his own Church.

CHAPTER XII.

THE IMMEDIATE CAUSES OF MY CONVERSION—IGNORANCE OF THE POOR ON RELIGIOUS SUBJECTS—A VISIT TO A DYING WOMAN—THE WINE SPILLED ALL OVER THE COMMUNION CLOTH—INDIFFERENCE MANIFESTED BY THE CLERGYMAN—MY FEELINGS ABOUT IT—I DETERMINE NEVER TO RECEIVE COMMUNION IN THE PROTESTANT CHURCH AGAIN—MY RESEARCHES AFTER TRUTH—I CALL ON A PROTESTANT CLERGYMAN FOR ADVICE, AND ON A CATHOLIC PRIEST—THE CLERGYMAN IS OBLIGED TO EXPLAIN MY VISIT TO HIS FAMILY—THE PRIEST ASSURES ME MY VISIT TO HIM SHALL BE KNOWN ONLY TO HIMSELF—I VISIT ANOTHER PRIEST—ALL TEACH THE SAME DOCTRINE—DR. SMITHSON PRONOUNCES MY FUTURE CONDEMNATION—I AM INFORMED HE USUALLY DOES SO TO INTENDING CONVERTS—MY FIRST INTERVIEW WITH A CATHOLIC NUN.

WHILE visiting the poor in Helston, I found deeper depths of wretchedness and misery than I had ever imagined. Language seemed only to have been given to the people to blaspheme the Author of speech. Life seemed only to be spent in defying the laws and commandments of the Author of life. The curse and the blow were the usual salutation of the parent to the child. No word of God, no thought of God, except in profanity. It seemed to me that the visits of the clergy were rare; now and then I heard that a Scripture reader had called, or that some person went round with tracts on a Sunday morning. But I could not find that any

practical good resulted either from the visits or the tracts.

One of the persons whom I was appointed to visit was a man of about five or six and thirty, who was dying slowly of decline. He was a weaver by trade. All his family had been weavers. He lay on the ground in a very large room, where three or four looms still stood. Those who had worked at them had died one by one. He was the last, and plainly his time was not far off. I saw at once that he was entirely ignorant of religion, and I tried to give him some instruction. He had been visited also by a High Church clergyman and a Scripture reader, and he spoke of both in the bitterest terms. All he wanted, poor man, was money to buy necessaries; comforts he had none. I soon perceived that his sole object in asking to be visited by us was to get temporal relief. For the same reason he encouraged the visits of the Scripture reader and the High Church clergyman. One preached one line of doctrine to him, and the other told him the very opposite. How could the dying man tell which to believe?

I had not much to give him, for Miss Jones was miserably narrow in her alms considering the wealth she lavished so freely on other things; but I think the poor fellow liked to see me, for I sympathised with his sufferings, listened to all the little details of his illness, and tried to soothe him with gentle words.

Another case also interested me much, and proved a

very practical comment on the teaching of the Church of England as to the Lord's Supper. A poor woman whom I visited was in a dying state. She had never received the Protestant Communion, and had no wish to receive it; indeed, she was strongly opposed to the idea. She could not see what good she was to get by it, neither could I tell her, for the words of the Articles and Prayer Book always seemed to me too vague to admit of definite explanation. I was, however, very high church. I had learned to believe that our Divine Lord was in some way present, or in some way gave Himself to us in the Sacrament of the Altar, though I could not have put my belief into any definite words. I doubt very much if there is a single Protestant clergyman, however high, who could or would state in a few words definitely what he believes on this subject. The clergyman whose church we attended was high church, and the Sister in charge of the house, though not allowed to speak to him, or hold any personal intercourse with him, was permitted to ask him to attend this poor woman, and to give her the Sacrament. Some time in the middle of the day was fixed, and I went to take communion with her. I brought a white cloth with me to cover the table, and arranged the place as well as I could. The poor woman was lying on a kind of sofa bed close to the table, and as the clergyman handed her the wine she spilled it all over herself and the cloth. I was greatly disturbed. When the service was over, the clergyman turned to me

politely, and said, 'I am sorry your cloth is so injured, but I hope it will wash out.' No thought ever seemed to cross his mind that it was anything sacred, that there was anything there *more* than pure wine. I could have understood it in a Low Church clergyman, who would leave the bread and wine on the table, after the prayer of consecration, to be taken away by the clerk, without one thought as to what became of it;* but I was shocked that Mr. —— should have acted thus. I took the stained cloth home very sorrowfully, and gave it to the Sister, saying, 'Dear ——, we are either reverencing this too much or too little.' I spent the remainder of the day in anxious thought and prayer; and, strange to say, for the first time I asked myself what did I really believe about the blessed Sacrament. I pondered over the Divine Lord's words again and again: 'Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood you shall not have life in you.' And I compared it with the words of St. Paul to the Corinthians, where he says, that the special guilt of some of them was that they did not discern the Lord's body. He, at least, was one of those whom our Lord had called, even by a special miracle, to teach His Church; and it was clear from the whole passage that St. Paul took the words of our Lord as recorded in St. John's Gospel in their natural literal sense.

It seemed to me clear and plain that either the bread

* See Note E.

and wine were changed into the body and blood of Christ, or they were not. Article 28 was sufficiently explicit as to the belief of the Church of England, and this Article, if words have any meaning, declared that our Lord's real body and blood were not there, and that the Sacrament should not be 'worshipped.' Hitherto I had some misty idea that Christ was in some way present in the Sacrament, or with it, no one knew how. I now saw plainly that there could be no shades of opinion about this matter—either our Divine Lord was really there, or He was not there. Our Divine Lord's words seemed to me plain—we were to eat His flesh and drink His blood. These words could only have one meaning if taken in their literal sense. If taken in a purely spiritual, or at least what Dissenters call a spiritual, sense, they could only mean the very reverse. Yet I knew that High Church clergymen would not say they believed in Transubstantiation, which must take place if our Lord's words are taken literally; yet they worshipped something, they knew not what, nor could they clearly define their own views. One subject, however, perplexed me greatly, and this was the withdrawal of the cup from the laity of the Catholic Church. I did not know the Catholic explanation of this withdrawal, which teaches that 'Christ is whole and entire, true God, and true man, under each.' A High Church clergyman, to whom I had mentioned the subject, once had assured me that Catholics only got half the Sacra-

ment. It was the same mistiness which led me to this doubt, and led him to express this strange theory. How could there be half a Sacrament? Christ was there whole and entire in every particle of the host, or He was not there.

I now felt bound to take some decided step to inform myself further as to the doctrine and practices of the Catholic Church. I had quite made up my mind never to receive the Protestant communion again. If I only receive bread and wine, what good could I gain thereby? The Articles and rubrics of the Church did not allow me to believe that I really and truly received Christ Himself. I could see no medium now.

After some consideration, I determined to write to my convert friend, Miss C——, and ask her to give me an introduction to some Catholic priest. As I was merely living as a visitor at Miss Jones's, I felt I was free to act as I pleased. Even had it been otherwise, when I believed that my immortal interests were at stake, I had a right to use every means in my power to ascertain the truth. I desired her to direct her reply for me to the nearest post-office, to be left till called for. It came immediately, but the address she gave me was far too distant for me to avail myself of it. I knew, however, ignorant as I was of Catholic theology, that every priest taught the same doctrine; that there were neither High Church, nor Low Church, nor Broad Church priests. I knew there

would be no fear, if I called on the nearest priest, that he would tell me not to trust in Sacraments, not to believe in Baptismal regeneration; while some one further off might declare him wrong, and answer me that Sacraments were what high churchmen taught them to be.

I wrote to the clergyman whose address my friend had given me, and asked him to give me an introduction to the priest nearest to me. He replied at once to my letter. I thought, however, that I would like to see some clergyman of my own church before I saw a priest. After some consideration, I determined, when I went to visit the sick, to call on the clergyman of our parish whom I had met in the room of the dying woman. His manner was very kind, and he had the peculiarly courteous and gentlemanly demeanour which generally indicates an Oxford education.

I knew where he lived. It was a large house just opposite to his church, and close to some very pretty schools. I rang the bell with considerable timidity, and as it was opened for me by a not very tidy servant boy, I heard a peal of laughter inside, and a rustling of dresses and pattering of feet. The tone of the laughter was not to be mistaken; some young ladies had seen me from the window, and evidently wanted to get a nearer view of myself and my dress. It was not a very pleasant commencement. The clergyman came to me in a few moments, and soon

made me feel quite at ease with him. As a friend I do not suppose any man could have been kinder, as a clergyman few could have been more helpless. He seemed not to have any decided opinion of his own on any given subject. He was supposed to be high church; but when I asked him some questions about Baptismal regeneration, he only gave me vague replies. As to the 'Lord's Supper' his views were still more vague. He believed that some spiritual grace was obtained by receiving it, but what grace, or in what manner conveyed, he would not say. He had selected Dr. Pusey as his guide, though he said he did not know him personally. He was impressed with the general idea that, because Dr. Pusey was supposed to be a very good man, therefore Dr. Pusey's opinions were to be received. This seemed to me little better, if at all different, from what I had frequently heard Dissenters say. Their minister was a very good man, therefore he must be right. It was simply instituting a man for the Church, and the teaching of a man for the teaching of the Church. Dr. Pusey's opinions are only held by a minority of the members of the church to which he belongs; and the very fact that they obtained the distinctive name of Puseyites shows that they were following the opinion of an individual. This might not be their own view of the case, but it is the popular view.

The clergyman now seemed anxious to get some

information from me about the Sisterhood. He thought that if we worked a little more under the clergy, and in union with them, much more good would be done; and in this I heartily agreed with him. When I was about to leave, I requested that he would not mention my visit to any one. He looked perplexed for a moment, and replied, 'My daughters saw you come in, what am I to say to them if they ask me?' I knew too well that his daughters had seen me come in, and moreover they watched me going out. I was greatly pained. It was not the first time I had found it impossible to have a private interview with a clergyman.

I had not remained long with this gentleman, and as I left his room I remembered that there was a very large Catholic church which I must pass on my way to the sick person whom I was going to visit. There was also a monastic-looking building close to it, where I knew a good many priests lived in company. I determined to wait no longer. I would, at least, ask a few questions. I pulled the bell, not without considerable fear. From childhood I had a peculiar dread of priests. One of my earliest recollections is that of driving on a lonely country road every Sunday in an open carriage, with my father and mother, to church. We always passed a priest. He was going in an opposite direction to say mass; and my poor father, who had a most extraordinary hatred to priests and Popery,

used to point him out to me as an object of fear and abhorrence. Yet here I was about to encounter an interview with the persons whom I had always so much dreaded.

A lay brother opened the door promptly, and inquired what I wanted. I asked to see a priest. Did I want to confess? he asked; if so, I could go into the church, and one of the fathers would be with me in a moment. I informed him as well as I could of my wishes, which were certainly rather vague. However, he seemed soon to understand what I had come for, and that I was almost ashamed of my intention. He then showed me into a room containing but little furniture, and yet withal cheerful-looking, for there were beautiful prints hung on the walls, and a small oratory with bright flowers at one end. Almost before I had time to glance round at this, one of the fathers entered. It did not take many words to make him understand my position. He was a foreigner, and, with the impulsive kindness of his race, wished to secure my salvation, as far as he could do so, at once. When he found I had only come to inquire, and by no means to take any further step, he was very anxious that I should see Dr. Manning; for, with a humility which touched me very much, he seemed to think I could learn more from him. 'You know,' he said, 'we all teach the same things. You will not find one who is a Manning, another a Grant, and another an Ullathorne;

but then there is something in the saying of it,' he added, in his broken English. When I was about to leave, he presented me with a work of Dr. Ullathorne's on the Immaculate Conception, which he hoped would remove my difficulties on this subject.

I took the little volume back with me and read it carefully, and thereby one of my greatest stumbling-blocks in the way of accepting Catholic faith was entirely removed. In the meanwhile I had received the address of a priest who lived near me, and as this gentleman was a convert, I thought he might be able to understand my difficulties better. Indeed, I had not many difficulties now, for it seemed to me that the great question was, Is there an Infallible Church, a church ordained by Christ Himself to *teach*? Scripture told me that there was, and it also told me that even in the time of the Apostles there were heretics who rejected their teaching and disclaimed their authority. Why, then, should there not be heresies now? I had heard High Church clergymen speak very warmly of Dissenters, and condemn them in strong terms as guilty of heresy and schism. But how could there be heretics unless there was some visible authority to define what was heresy and what was not? and how could there be schism unless there was one visible Church from which it would be a sin to separate?

At that time I had not thought much about the theory of Apostolic succession in the Protestant Church, but

I knew the great majority of Anglican clergymen rejected the doctrine. It seemed to me, however, that even if the Protestant Church had Apostolic succession, it could not fail to be in schism by its separation from the Catholic Church at the time of the Reformation. Then there was this very awful Article which accused the Catholic Church of having erred in matters of Faith. Admitting that this were true, that the 'Roman' Church had erred, where then was the Church before the Reformation? I knew the current Protestant view was that the Church had become corrupt, and was cleansed by the Reformers. On Protestant grounds, and premising that Christ had not promised infallibility to His Church, this was very admissible. But the High Church argument was that Christ had promised to be always with His Church; yet it had erred, for the argument that some part of the Church had not erred, and some had, was to me simply absurd. If the Church had erred before the Reformation, it had failed, Christ's promise had failed, and every one was free to choose a form of belief for himself. If the Church had not erred before the Reformation, the reformers committed the sin of schism by separating from the Church, and the sin of heresy by denying the Sacraments. I had not then read Challoner's 'Missionary Priests' or any Catholic works on this period of our national history. Had I done so, I should have seen that Catholic priests were hanged and tortured for saying mass, and for believing in what High Churchmen

now profess to believe regarding the blessed Sacrament. Assuredly, if any Protestant clergyman had attempted a 'high' or 'low' celebration, or so much as breathed the word mass in connection with the Communion Service, he would have discovered what the true doctrine of his Church was in such matters by some process much less agreeable than a monitory letter from his bishop.*

After I had paid one or two visits to Father Peterson, I fully made up my mind to be received into the Catholic Church. Yet after I felt convinced that this was the one true Church, all the old prejudices and ignorances of early education made me hesitate and tremble before taking the final step. I wrote to Dr. Smithson to acquaint him with my purpose. As I expected, I immediately received a very angry letter from him, in which he assured me solemnly that I should certainly be damned if I became a Catholic. I was greatly distressed by this communication, also by Dr. Smithson's assurances that I was, in any case, in no fit state of mind to take such an important step. I did not then know that it was usual with High Church clergymen to try and frighten those who looked up to their guidance when all other resources failed. Then I was urged not to forsake the church of my baptism; but, as Dr. Smithson himself admitted that many who came to Protestant clergymen

* See Note F.

to receive that sacrament never received it at all, I could not see the force of the argument. It was quite possible that neither I nor Dr. Smithson had ever been baptized, so utterly careless were the clergymen of the Established Church on this subject some years ago.

I enclosed Dr. Smithson's letter to Father Peterson, but he answered me it was only what I might expect under the circumstances. He told me that on one occasion when a 'penitent' of Dr. Smithson's was about to be received into the Church by him, the Doctor had actually called on him and tried to dissuade him from receiving her. His plea was that he had heard the lady's confessions, and he considered she was a hypocrite. Happily, the lady had now been five years a Catholic, and her confessions could no more be brought against her by those who heard them, either as a real or imaginary accusation.

The question now arose as to where I should go while making the necessary preparations for my reception into the Church. But this was settled more easily than I had anticipated. Father Peterson had just established a Convent; it was quite near the presbytery where he lived, and he took me there without even letting the nuns know I was coming. It was the first time I had ever seen a nun, and I was not a little amazed at their cheerfulness and openness. There was evidently no constraint here. They were entirely under the clergy, and

with them. They all seemed to know Father Peterson, and spoke to him when they met. The house they occupied was very small, and I learned afterwards that they were very poor. The best room, indeed the only good room, was fitted up as an oratory; and here I knew I could worship Jesus in the Sacrament of His love without doubt and without fear. Here there were no shades of opinion, or views, or questions how much might be believed or how little.

Miss Jones had been informed by the Sister of my intentions, and her one only desire seemed to be that I should not go direct from her Institution to the Convent. Father Peterson urged me to do so, and said most truly that I ought not to take the risk of a railway journey with the uncertainty, which for many reasons I had, as to whether I was even validly baptized. But I was anxious to see my aged relative, Mrs. Grace, before taking this final step, and I wished to make some arrangements also about the future. I could not tell whether it would be possible for me to live with her even for a time. My own wish was to enter a Convent at once, but Father Peterson, as I think most wisely, objected to my doing so at least for a year. He told me that there were vocations to particular orders, as well as vocations to the religious state itself; that a person who might be fitted for a contemplative life might not persevere in an active order; of course

the reverse would be equally true. All this was entirely opposite to Dr. Smithson's theory and Miss Jones's practice. They were to decide, not the person most interested in the decision; but if she failed, the blame was freely credited to her, and not to their mistaken selection.

CHAPTER XIII.

OPINIONS OF MY RELATIVES WHEN THEY FIND I AM DETERMINED TO BECOME A CATHOLIC—I AM ASKED SERIOUSLY HOW MUCH I PAY FOR GETTING ABSOLUTION—DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE CONDUCT OF PUSEYITES AND DISSENTERS TOWARDS ME AFTER I BECAME A CATHOLIC—SOME ACCOUNT OF MY RECEPTION INTO THE CHURCH—THE CREED OF POPE PIUS IX. COMPARED WITH THE ARTICLES OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND—DR. PUSEY'S MISTINESS ON DOCTRINAL QUESTIONS, NOTICED IN A RECENT PAMPHLET—CONCLUSION OF PART I.

I NEED scarcely say that my relatives were greatly shocked when they found that I had really resolved to become a Catholic. With their views, the change was one from truth to falsehood, from worshipping Christ to worshipping idols. I learned thereby some very painful lessons of the depth of human prejudice, and the extraordinary difficulty which even educated minds have in comprehending the feelings and thoughts of others. I was assured that Papists were all idolaters; it was in vain that I declared they were not. I had taken every pains to study Catholic doctrine, and to become acquainted with Catholic teaching; my accusers knew nothing of it, except what they heard or read in anti-Catholic publications, yet I was by no means to be believed. On any other matter they would have taken my word without hesitation, and on any other subject

my dear old relative would have believed my assertion in preference to that of any one else. I soon began to learn that it required something more than argument, something more even than miracles, to convince men of Truth; for had not miracles failed to convert the world even when performed by Christ Himself?

Then a friend, a man who knew the world well, and in business matters was shrewd and practical, asked me seriously what I paid every time I went to confession; and another friend told me triumphantly that he had dined in company with a Catholic priest and a Catholic layman, not long before, on a Fast day. The priest eat meat, and the layman eat fish, and assured my friend that he could not afford to pay for a dispensation; but of course the priest had nothing to pay, as he could dispense himself. To all this I could only offer explanations that were not believed. My friends were quite certain that they knew more about the matter than I did. Would to God they had taken even half the trouble I had to know the truth.

I mentioned these stories to a priest soon after, and he was greatly amused. 'Certainly,' he said, 'if we got money from every one who came to confession, we should soon be rich men.' As to the story about the priest eating meat, he assured me that the priest would have to get a dispensation from his ecclesiastical superior, as well as the layman; and that my friend must have entirely misunderstood what was said to him.

I found, however, on the whole, I got on better at home as a Catholic than I had done as a Puseyite. There is a straightforwardness, and a hatred of underhand ways, in the English character which eventually win respect for any one who acts up to his principles. At first, and particularly in the family circle, there may be, and generally is, a painful amount of persecution to endure. And yet, what a most strange inconsistency it is for those who claim liberty of conscience for themselves to deny it to others! But, after a time, when the first feelings of irritation have blown off, and when a consistent course of action has been persevered in, friends begin to respect what they do not as yet understand.

My High Church friends, however, acted very differently. The clergyman whom I had known most intimately passed me in the street without so much as bowing to me. An otherwise most courteous man forgot his courtesy; and why?—because I had followed the principles he had taught me to their legitimate conclusion. Then I had deteriorated—a very formidable word, of which terrible use is made to terrify ladies who look anxiously Romeward, and may yet be recalled by words or persuasions.

But I am anticipating. My dear and loving relative now arranged to give me a sitting-room to myself, which she could easily do, as her house was very large; so that I could see any Catholic friends I wished without annoying

them or her. Every arrangement was made for my comfort, as it would have been had I never been separated from my home. I only remained a few days, and then returned to Helston; not, thank God, to Miss Jones's gloomy abode of misery and unkindness, but to the loving-hearted cheerful nuns of whom I have already spoken. I received the warmest welcome. At great inconvenience to themselves they gave me up a little room, and vied with each other in showing me every attention. I was simply amazed at all I saw and heard. They would scarcely leave me alone even for an hour; and their looks of amazement and horror when they heard all I had suffered at Miss Jones's satisfied me that the practices of Catholic convents were very different. Indeed, I had now a good opportunity of judging for myself; and I watched every one, and every movement, closely. Their enclosure had not been at that time strictly established; and they were not what are called contemplative nuns, so that at any time they could receive ladies to board in the convent. They had also a day-school, and hoped, when they moved to a large house, to have a boarding-school.

All the duties were regularly attended to. One day's occupation was the same as another; still they never seemed wearied, nor did there seem to me even any monotony in this regularity.

An early day was fixed by Father Peterson for my reception. Perhaps some of my readers may be

interested in a brief account of the ceremony. The day before I made my general confession—how different it was to feel sure now that the absolution I received was valid –that I was performing a religious act which was not merely tolerated but required by the Church. In the morning I was baptised conditionally, and now at least I was certain of having received that most necessary sacrament. I then went into the little oratory where the nuns were kneeling, and the altar was prepared for mass. The priest gave a short address, and then knelt before the altar, and said the *Veni Creator*. The Psalm *Miserere* was now repeated, and then the priest said the following prayer:—

'O Lord, whose property is always to have mercy and to spare, receive our supplication that this thy servant, whom the sentence of excommunication doth bind, the compassion of thy goodness may mercifully absolve, through Christ our Lord.'

I then professed my faith by reciting the Creed of Pope Pius IV. I shall give this Creed in full, placing opposite to it the Articles of the Church of England, which were framed to oppose it, so that the reader may see the difference at a glance. Surely no one could compare this Creed, and these Articles, and yet declare that they could be easily reconciled with each other. The Creed of Pope Pius IV. commences with the Nicene Creed, which is so well known that

it is not necessary to give it here. The Catholic translation of it, as given in the 'Golden Manual,' differs but little from that in the Protestant Communion Service.

CREED OF POPE PIUS.	ARTICLES OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.
I most steadfastly admit and embrace the apostolical and ecclesiastical Traditions, and all other observances and constitutions of the same Church.	VI. *Of the Sufficiency of the holy Scriptures for salvation.*
I also admit the holy Scriptures, according to that sense which our holy mother the Church hath held and doth hold, to whom it belongeth to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the Scriptures: neither will I ever take and interpret them otherwise than according to the unanimous consent of the Fathers.	Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of the holy Scripture we do understand those canonical Books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church.
I also profess that there are truly and properly Seven Sacraments of the new law, instituted by Jesus Christ our Lord, and necessary for the	XXV. *Of the Sacraments.* Sacraments ordained of Christ be not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession, but rather they be certain sure witnesses, and effectual

salvation of mankind, though not all for every one: to wit, Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Order, and Matrimony: and that they confer grace: and that of these, Baptism, Confirmation, and Order cannot be repeated without sacrilege. I also receive and admit the received and approved ceremonies of the Catholic Church, used in the solemn administration of the aforesaid sacraments.

I embrace and receive all and every one of the things which have been defined and declared in the holy Council of Trent concerning original sin and justification.

signs of grace, and God's good will towards us, by the which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our Faith in him.

There are two Sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the Gospel, that is to say, Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord.

Those five commonly called Sacraments, that is to say, Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony, and extreme Unction, are not to be counted for Sacraments of the Gospel, being such as have grown partly of the corrupt following of the Apostles, partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures; but yet have not like nature of Sacraments with Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, for that they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God.

The Sacraments were not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon, or to be carried about, but that we should duly use them. And in such only as worthily receive the same they have a wholesome effect or operation: but they that receive them unworthily pur-

I profess, likewise, that in the Mass there is offered to God a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead. And that in the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist there is truly, really, and substantially the Body and Blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ; and that there is made a conversion of the whole substance of the Bread into the Body, and of the whole substance of the wine into the Blood; which conversion the Catholic Church calleth Transubstantiation. I also confess that under either kind alone Christ is received whole and entire, and a true sacrament.

chase to themselves damnation, as Saint *Paul* saith.

XXXI. *Of the one Oblation of Christ finished upon the Cross.*

The Offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction, for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin, but that alone. Wherefore the sacrifices of Masses, in the which it was commonly said, that the Priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, were blasphemous fables, and dangerous deceits.

XXVIII. Transubstantiation (or the change of the substance of Bread and Wine) in the Supper of the Lord, cannot be proved by holy Writ; but it is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions.

The Body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten, in the Supper, only after an heavenly and spiritual manner. And the mean whereby the Body

I constantly hold that there is a Purgatory, and that the souls therein detained are helped by the suffrages of the faithful.

Likewise, that the saints reigning together with Christ are to be honoured and invocated, and that they offer prayers to God for us, and that their relics are to be had in veneration.

I most firmly assert that the Images of Christ, of the Mother of God ever Virgin, and also of other Saints, ought to be had and retained, and that due honour and veneration are to be given them.

of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is Faith.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshipped.

XXX. *Of both kinds.*

The Cup of the Lord is not to be denied to the Lay-people: for both the parts of the Lord's Sacrament, by Christ's ordinance and commandment, ought to be ministered to all Christian men alike.

XXII. *Of Purgatory.*

The Romish Doctrine concerning Purgatory, Pardons, Worshipping and Adoration, as well of Images as of Reliques, and also invocation of Saints, is a fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God.

I also affirm that the power of Indulgences was left by Christ in the Church, and that the use of them is most wholesome to Christian people.

I acknowledge the Holy Catholic Apostolic Roman Church for the mother and mistress of all churches; and I promise true obedience to the Bishop of Rome, successor of St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles, and Vicar of Jesus Christ.

I likewise undoubtingly receive and profess all other things delivered, required, and declared by the sacred Canons and General Councils, and particularly by the Holy Council of Trent, and I condemn, reject, and anathematise all things contrary thereto, and all heresies which the Church hath condemned, rejected, and anathematised.

XXXVII. *Of the Civil Magistrates.*

The Queen's Majesty hath the chief power in this Realm of *England*, and other her Dominions, unto whom the chief Government of all Estates of this Realm, whether they be Ecclesiastical or Civil, in all causes doth appertain, and is not, nor ought to be, subject to any foreign Jurisdiction.

The Bishop of *Rome* hath no jurisdiction in this Realm of *England*.

XXI. *Of the Authority of General Councils.*

General Councils may not be gathered together without the commandment and will of Princes. And when they be gathered together (forasmuch as they be an assembly of men, whereof all be not governed with the Spirit and Word of God), they may err, and sometimes have erred, even in things pertaining unto God. Wherefore things or-

I, N. N., do at this present freely profess and sincerely hold this true Catholic faith, out of which no one can be saved; and I promise most constantly to retain and confess the same entire and inviolate, by God's assistance, to the end of my life.

dained by them as necessary to salvation have neither strength nor authority, unless it may be declared that they be taken out of holy Scripture.

XIX. *Of the Church.*

The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.

As the Church of *Jerusalem*, *Alexandria*, and *Antioch*, have erred; so also the Church of *Rome* hath erred, not only in their living and manner of Ceremonies, but also in matters of Faith.

XVIII. *Of obtaining eternal Salvation only by the Name of Christ.*

They also are to be had accursed that presume to say, That every man shall be saved by the Law or Sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that Law, and the light of Nature. For holy Scripture doth set out unto us only

the Name of Jesus Christ,
whereby men must be saved.

The *Confiteor* is then said, and the priest gives the usual absolution. Then follows the special absolution by which the convert is released from the chain of excommunication:—

'May our Lord Jesus Christ absolve thee, and I, by his authority, absolve thee from the chain of excommunication which thou hast incurred [for such an action or cause] and restore thee to the communion and unity of the faithful, and to the holy sacraments of the church, in the name of the Father ✠ and of the Son, &c.'

The *Te Deum* was now read, and a short prayer. The holy Sacrifice of the Mass was then celebrated. And I assisted at that which until now, as a member of the Protestant Church, I had been obliged to consider a 'blasphemous fable,' and adored the most Holy Sacrament, which the Church to which I had belonged had declared was contrary to Christ's ordinance (Art. 28). Whatever views the reader may hold on such subjects, I trust at least that he will grant me the merit of consistency. I believe, indeed, that one reason why what are commonly called Puseyite opinions are only in favour with a small section of the Protestant Church is, because Englishmen as a general rule are characteristically straightforward both in word and act. They naturally shrink from trying to explain away

words which are as plain as language can make them, and from introducing into their Church the very doctrines and practices on the condemnation of which their existence as a Church depends. While these pages have been passing through the press, a pamphlet has been issued with the significant title, 'Is the Pope of Rome an Apostolic Bishop?' With the writer's argument I have nothing to do. His opinions are the very opposite of Catholic. But he too, with keen eye has discerned, and with thoughtful mind has exposed, the singular inconsistency to which I have been obliged to allude more than once. To show that at least I am not singular in noticing this, I give a brief extract from the pamphlet:—

'And with these "many others" must be numbered, alas! our *Doctor Amabilis* himself. He is at least *reported* to have said in a letter to the 'Weekly Register,' a short time ago, "The primacy of the Bishop of Rome we readily admit; neither in the SUPREMACY of the Bishop of Rome is there anything to which we object."

'It would be interesting to know in whose name Dr. Pusey is so liberal and full of good nature. It is not in that of the Church of England, most unquestionably, or of any part of it; for if there is one earthly thing that that Church *objects* to more than another, it is that very supremacy.

'If Dr. Pusey be right, however, the Church of

England must be wrong; for if there is nothing in the papal supremacy to which we ought to object, it is our duty to acknowledge it. There is no middle course; the Pope has either a claim to that supremacy, or he has not. If he has no claim, there appears to be *something* objectionable in his supremacy. If he has a claim, Queen Victoria has none.

'Dr. Pusey has, once at least in his life, if not oftener, professed to "subscribe willingly and *ex animo* to the doctrine that no foreign prince or prelate hath or ought to have any *jurisdiction*, *power*, *superiority*, *pre-eminence*, *authority*, *ecclesiastical or spiritual*, within these realms." Perhaps he will explain why he does not *object* to the Pope's having what he has professed to believe he *ought not* to have.

'Perhaps Dr. Pusey will explain, for the sake of younger men, why he does not *object* to that, which, whatever he may think of it in other respects, he must acknowledge to have been from the first, at least *unlawful*.'

I too, I must confess, often wonder who were included in the mystic 'we,' in whose name so many strange opinions have been put forth and defended of late years. And to whom the revelation had been made that the Saints in Paradise were thankful for the correction of their errors; for surely their opinion could only be known now by some heaven-sent oracle.

It will be thirteen years in July since I made this

great change; will the reader believe my assurance that I have never repented it? In seeking for admission into the one Fold, by the one Baptism, I found the ONE FAITH. Here there were no questions, no difficulties, no doubts. Christ speaks through Peter, and we, the sheep and lambs committed to his care, have but to hear and obey. From pope to pope, from bishop to bishop, from council to council, the unbroken line of apostolic succession and apostolic teaching has been transmitted. As new heresies arose, they have been condemned, and the truth defined in plainer words by the authority of Christ himself. Here no questions of faith have been left open so that men might believe the most opposite doctrines, and yet call themselves members of a Church professing one Faith. Here, if a man does not believe what the Church teaches, he simply ceases to be a Catholic; and here no man can be in doubt as to what he is bound to believe.

PART II.

TEN YEARS IN A CATHOLIC CONVENT.

CHAPTER XIV.

I AM ANXIOUS TO BECOME A NUN, AND VISIT DIFFERENT CONVENTS—VOCATIONS TO THE ACTIVE AND CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE ARE QUITE DIFFERENT—THE SUBJECT CAREFULLY CONSIDERED—PRIESTS ARE NEVER ANXIOUS TO INDUCE LADIES TO ENTER CONVENTS, AND OFTEN DISCOURAGE THEM—PUSEYITE FRIENDS ARE SCANDALISED AT MY DRESS—INTERVIEW WITH CARDINAL WISEMAN—HIS KINDNESS TO ME ONLY CEASES WITH HIS LIFE—I FIND MY HOME AT LAST, AND ENTER THE CONVENT AT —— SOME ACCOUNT OF THE VARIOUS NUNS AND THEIR OCCUPATIONS—AN INTERVIEW WITH THE BISHOP—AN ACCOUNT OF MY RECEPTION AND BECOMING A NOVICE, AND OF MY PROFESSION OR RECEIVING THE BLACK VEIL.

I REMAINED with the good nuns for about a week, and then returned to Mrs. Grace. I had not as yet received the Sacrament of Confirmation, and Father Peterson informed me that his grace Cardinal Wiseman wished me to receive it from himself, and in his private chapel. As he was just then going abroad, or into the country (at this lapse of time I cannot remember which), it was deferred until his return.

I found my position at home much less painful than I had anticipated. In the first place my friends were hopeless of altering my opinions, and thus felt less inclined to trouble me about them. In the second place, I got at least the credit of being consistent, and was no longer taunted with calling myself a member

of the Church of England, while I believed all the doctrines of the Church of Rome. Then I was myself very much happier; the burden of anxiety and doubt was gone. I had said *Credo*, and I knew that the Creed to which I had subscribed could not be altered or explained away; I knew now that wherever I went I should find the one Faith, and that the guardians of the Faith would not give its dogmas one interpretation in one place and another interpretation in another.

Strange to say, the only persons who showed much resentment were my High Church friends. Dr. Smithson absolutely forbade Miss King, my dearest and oldest friend, to hold any intercourse with me. The Rev. Mr. G——, by whose sermons I had been taught much of what I now believe, passed me by in the streets without so much as a bow of courtesy. Why was this? I had followed out their teaching to its legitimate conclusion, and they were angry, not with themselves for their teaching, but with me for learning what they taught. So wonderful are the inconsistencies of those who deem themselves the most logical in their reasoning.

Still I could not but feel for those who treated me so harshly. The multitude said their teaching led to Rome. I had gone to Rome, and therefore was an example that the multitude was right. People who cared nothing about religion made my conversion an occasion for insulting and belieing an excellent and

most devoted clergyman. It was in vain that I assured all whom I knew that he had nothing to do with my conversion; I could not make myself believed; and he was more or less the sufferer. I do not think he would have suffered more if he had treated me with ordinary courtesy.

I have alluded to a very desolating sorrow which cast a blight upon my life at an early age. From that period until I entered the Sisterhood I had worn deep mourning. The Sisters' dress, I felt, was the best substitute for it. Had I consulted my own feelings I would have put on mourning again, but at the earnest request of the priest who received me into the church I did not do so. Without attempting any extreme of fashion, I dressed simply as I would have done under ordinary circumstances. It was summer, and I even selected the sombre colours which, without being actual mourning, would have best suited my taste. I soon found that my dress was considered by my High Church friends one of the great signs of my 'deterioration.' They took it as—and indeed it was in some measure intended to be—a protest that I disclaimed any pretence of still being a 'nun;' and seemed to consider this the culmination of my crime.

I soon saw the wisdom of the advice given me by Father Peterson. When I returned to —— at the time appointed for my confirmation, several ladies who had left Sisterhoods were there also. These ladies still

attired themselves in a sort of half-conventual costume, and I was desired by His Eminence, Cardinal Wiseman, to inform them that he would not confirm them unless they appeared in an ordinary secular dress. I believe they found more difficulty in complying with this requirement than in any other matter connected with their reception into the Church. I understood that it was required as a sort of protest against any kind of recognition of Protestant Sisterhoods as representing in even the least degree the religious life.

I had the honour of several private interviews with His Eminence at this time, and I found him a very different person from what I had been led to suppose. I saw none of that haughtiness of manner of which I had heard him accused. Until his death I had the privilege of corresponding with him. He never failed to reply to my letters almost immediately; and a few days before he was seized with his last illness, he sent me a copy of some verses which he had printed for private circulation.

My desire to consecrate myself to the service of God in the religious life had never diminished; but I found to my surprise that as a general rule Catholic priests were more inclined to discourage than to foster such an inclination. All this was so contrary to what I had expected. I soon found a vocation was considered a very serious question, and that the mere wish to be a nun was by no means an indication that one was really

called to such a holy state. I soon found there were vocations to different orders, which should also be carefully considered, and that there were also vocations, if I may so say, to different convents. By this latter remark I mean that a person might visit several different convents, say of Sisters of Mercy, and feel more inclined to join one than another; and that if this inclination were not the result of mere caprice, it might be an indication of God's will.

All this was so different to my Protestant, or even to my Puseyite notions of the conventual life. I also found that nuns were equally careful not to encourage persons to enter convents unless they believed they were really fit for such a life. To this rule, however, I must admit I have known some exceptions. I am writing for truth's sake, and not for effect, or to promote a theory: therefore I shall write candidly on all such subjects. It is one of the strange inconsistencies of Protestantism that while it supposes nuns to be capable of every crime, and guilty of the grossest enormities, it is nevertheless fearfully scandalised and amazed if it hears of a nun committing even the smallest fault.

I had now to consider carefully whether I should choose an active or a contemplative order. For many reasons, which perhaps would scarcely interest the reader, I chose the latter. But since the destruction of religious houses at the time of the Reformation,

some nuns, whose rule had been purely contemplative, have been obliged to assume some of the duties of the active orders; and cloistered religious gave up a portion of their time to teaching the poor, and to such other duties for the good of their neighbour as are not incompatible with their vow of enclosure. But such changes can never be made at the caprice or inclination of any reverend mother, or even by a bishop. In all cases the permission of the holy see must be obtained. Thus in Ireland, some of the very best and most efficient poor schools are managed by nuns belonging to enclosed orders. There was a special necessity that they should undertake this work of mercy. Long before the Sisters of Mercy were founded in that country, the Carmelites and Poor Clares were the sole instructors of Catholic children. At a later period the Ursulines came to their assistance. Even at the present day in many towns there is only one convent, and the necessity of instruction falls on those who might not otherwise be engaged in it.

My first thoughts naturally turned to the kind nuns who had allowed me to remain with them during the most solemn and momentous period of my life. But for some reason which I cannot explain, I found that I had no inclination to ask admission to their order. I stayed with them again for a short time, and all that I saw of them increased my love and reverence for them. I now visited many convents, but still felt undecided.

I had, in fact, left Mrs. Grace, for the purpose of seeing some religious houses, as there was no convent in the town where she resided, neither was there one anywhere near it.

I found my home at last, the home from which, thank God, I have never parted and never shall part till I die. I had been staying with some Protestant friends at D——, and a priest there who was my confessor for the time told me he thought he knew a convent where I should find all I wished. He gave me a note of introduction to the Superior, who, he informed me, was a very highly gifted person, one who had given her heart and her more than ordinary intellect to God at a very early age, and who had been appointed Abbess of the convent as soon as she had attained the required seniority. She had been previously mistress of novices for some years.

On receiving a letter from this lady to say I could come and see the convent, I lost no time in setting out. I had a railway journey of a few hours, and in the evening arrived at C——. I found myself outside a fearfully gloomy looking building, and felt almost inclined to turn away in despair. I soon learned that the exterior adds as little to one's comfort or discomfort in the convent as in the world. I was shown by the porteress into a gloomy-looking parlour which quite corresponded in all respects with the unattractive exterior. I had not many minutes to wait before

I beheld one of the sweetest faces it has ever been my lot to see, and was clasped in one of the most loving embraces it has ever been my happiness to receive. I cannot describe that face to you, you should see it to know all its beauty.

I soon knew that I had found my home. You must not imagine, however, that I was fascinated by the Lady Abbess and enticed into remaining by smiles and caresses. She could not help being attractive, and I could not help being attracted by her; but she knew well that love for her was not a vocation, and with all my ignorance of religious life I knew that it would take something more than this to make me a good nun. I have had many a proof of this since. I have seen more than one novice leave the convent almost broken-hearted, her love for our gentle mother unchanged after the lapse of years; and yet that love having to be sacrificed on both sides where there was a manifest unfitness, either for our order, in some cases, and for the life of a nun in any order, in others.

A very cheerful-looking young Sister brought me my meals while I remained. I could not sleep in the convent, as the rule of enclosure was very strict, and the Sisters had no guest house, but I was allowed to remain all day. I at once concluded that my attendant was a lay Sister, for I could not suppose it possible that any lady would wait on me as she did. I cannot tell you how amused she was afterwards when

I came to know her well, and told her my mistake. It was true that the Sisters had often brought my meals in the convent where I had stayed when I was received into the Church, but they had lay Sisters also who did the principal part of the domestic work, hence I concluded, when this Sister attended me regularly, that she must be a lay Sister.

As it seemed likely now that I would ask admission as a Postulant, permission was obtained from the Bishop for me to see the interior of the convent. It was certainly much more cheerful than the outside. Every Sister whom I met had the same look of content and happiness, which I well knew could not be put on. I saw the large schools, filled with children, each busy at her task; the kitchen, where some of the poorest were fed every morning; the dispensary, where simple medicines were distributed to the poor: there I found an elderly nun engaged in administering doses to some of the girls. I thought there was rather a comic look of 'I may as well smile as cry' in some of the young faces, and that the nun herself was not without some sly humour, as she looked from those whom she had dosed to those about to receive her attention next. This lady was a widow, she had been possessed of considerable property at her profession, she devoted part of it to the relatives of her late husband, and the remainder was given to the poor.

When I had been made fully acquainted with the

rules and constitutions of the order, I asked permission to enter it on trial as a Postulant. My request was granted, and as I had no one's consent to ask except my own, I only returned to —— for a few days, and came back at once to the convent. Before a week had elapsed, I felt quite at home. There were no mysteries, no concealments, in fact, the great object was to let me know everything instead of trying to conceal anything from me. But what amazed me most of all was the conduct of the Abbess. Even before I became a Catholic, I had utterly disbelieved all the silly falsehoods which were so freely circulated amongst Protestants about conventual life. I did not expect to find dungeons, or chained victims, or young recluses pining away in hopeless misery, but I had still my preconceived notions about a Lady Abbess. Although I knew poor Miss Jones had carried all this to an extreme, still I did expect some special state would surround the head of a Sisterhood. And now I feel that my real difficulty has commenced. How can I make my non-Catholic readers understand the beauty and the realities of religious life? how can I make them understand that the Superior is obeyed not for herself but for God, and that she may be in word and act—nay, that she *must* be in word and act—the lowliest of all, while she receives not for herself but for Another the respect and obedience of all.

When I had been a month in the convent, I made

a retreat of three days. The object of this was to give me time to consider whether I still wished to persevere after the brief trial I had made of convent life. This wonderful, this mystical life, so little understood, and so much misrepresented; how shall I write of it that those without may see it and know it as we see it and know it within? Believe me, if all or even the least part of the evil that is said of it were true, I would be the first to tell you. Believe me, those who seek for truth find it, but it is not seeking for truth to believe every idle story without enquiring carefully whether such tales have any foundation in fact. You will say, perhaps, that the Saurin case has quite convinced you that there must be much evil in convents, though it has failed to show even a trace of those deadly crimes of which the ignorant and unthinking accuse us nuns; at least you may argue that it shows our life is very petty, very contemptible, very useless. I ask you in justice to us, and in justice to yourself, to consider carefully what I am about to write on the subject of the religious life in the Catholic Church. Perhaps you may see that if Miss Saurin had lived that life in all its purity and beauty, the Saurin case could never have happened. Even in the college of the Apostles there was one who fell from his glorious calling, who failed to understand the greatness of the vocation to which Christ Himself had admitted him. He was scandalised at his Master's words and acts,

and yet that Master was his Creator and his Lord. May I also remind you that our Divine Lord said, those who did His Father's will, should know the doctrine which He taught was Divine. Hence there is something more needed than to hear the truth. Reason may enable us to comprehend the mysteries of science. Faith alone can enable us to comprehend the mysteries of religion: faith is the gift of God, but we must ask for this gift and labour for it by doing God's will, if we desire to obtain it. The beauty and holiness of the religious life may be fully explained to you, but you may fail to recognise it. It cannot, at least, cause you to accept error for truth, if before proceeding further you utter one earnest aspiration that the Truth may Himself teach you what is Truth.

The religious life is so eminently part of, and a consequence of, Catholic truth, that, to explain its end and its working, we must go back to the first principles of religion. The great St. Bernard as he paced the cloisters of Clairvaux was heard to ask himself continually, 'Why have I come hither?' His self-questioning had special reference to his life as a monk. But we also, we others, should ask ourselves the same question, 'Why have I come hither?' A few years ago I did not exist, in a few years to come my earthly existence will have ended. Why have I come hither? I came not into this world of myself. I have been sent. I did not choose my own position in life.

I have been placed in it. I am a creature, therefore I must have had a Creator. 'Fuit homo missus de Deo, cui nomen erat Johannes.'—'There was a man sent from God whose name was John,' may be said, *mutatis mutandis*, of each of us—

Mutato nomine, de te
Fabula narratur.

Change but the name, and it is true of each of us we are 'sent from God.' John came for a witness, and we also come, being sent, like him, to fill some special place in creation, and to accomplish some special work. Willingly or unwillingly we do the work of God. Granted that this God, this Almighty Sender, is infinitely wise and infinitely good, we are wise and good in proportion as we fulfil the end for which He sent us.

But we must go back still further, and take a brief glance at the position of the first man and woman who were 'sent from God.' We find them in Paradise, the paradise of pleasure, where all was 'good.' One act of submission was required of them, one token of fealty to their Eternal Lord, at whose hands they held this vast and noble estate. We, according to our human notions, might have expected that a very different token of submission would be required. We might have expected that the Almighty would have summoned His creatures from time to time to adore Him, surrounded by his angelic hosts, and thus to

acknowledge Him as their Creator. That, overawed by His majesty, they would have been kept in submission rather through fear than through love, rather through compulsion than as an act of free will. But already the mystery of life had commenced. Man is placed in a certain position without permission to choose any other; it is a necessity of being created. Man is free to act in that position as he pleases; it is a munificent condescension of the Creator.

The tenure of Paradise rested on the eating or not eating the fruit of a particular tree. How simple the prohibition; how trifling seemed the act of restraint. Surely this new and noble creature man would content himself thus far. And the infidel sneers at the folly of man in not restraining so contemptible a desire; and, alas! in the same breath accuses his Creator for having given so simple and easy a test of man's obedience. From this we see how what we call trifles may be estimated by God. The future of the human race hung trembling in the balance while Eve hesitated between obedience and sin. Four thousand years later, the world's destinies also rested on the inclination of a woman's will. This second Eve, placed by her Immaculate Conception in the same position as the first, was also free to choose, and the Eternal Spirit waited to hear her utterance, 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Be it done to me according to thy word;' before He could through her repair the fault of Eve. Each was

free to choose, and upon the choice of each the two most momentous periods of the world's history depended.

Eve sinned by disobedience in eating the forbidden fruit, and by pride in believing that she was right, and that what God had said was not true. Hence the special punishment of woman was that she should be under the dominion of her husband, compelled to obey, and her pride humiliated by the compulsion. Hence the position which woman occupied in the social scale, until the obedience of the second Eve in some measure freed her from the curse. Thus we have in the Old Testament history two classes of women—the one and by far the larger class continually oppressed and enslaved; the other, of whom the examples are rare, types of the second Eve, obtaining some deliverance or help for their nation by some act of heroic obedience. Thus we have Debora obeying Barach, and delivering Israel; Esther obeying Mardochai, and delivering her people from a cruel destruction.

All this subjection and humiliation of woman was a punishment for woman's sin. But although the new Eve had by her obedience freed woman in some degree from her state of penal servitude, she did not and could not restore woman to her original state of innocence and bliss.

By the fall of our first parents in Paradise, the image of God in which we were created became obscured and

faded. We degenerated in intellect, our wills became inclined to evil, obedience and humility were no longer easy; we must sow in tears, and with much painful strife endeavour to keep our bodies in subjection, lest to temporal loss should be added eternal pain. This is one view of our state. But there is another. Until the coming of Christ, the conditions of salvation were stern and inexorable. The terms on which salvation could be obtained were as stringent as the sentence, 'In what day soever that thou shalt eat of it thou shalt die the death.' The ten commands and all the enactments of the Jewish law admitted of no modification. Thou shalt or thou shalt not—these were the terms in which God's law was given. Obedience was compulsory, and the Jewish man as well as the Jewish woman was subjected to the pains, penalties, and exactions of so rigorous a code of laws, that almost every act was restrained by some prescription in matters which might appear otherwise of the most trivial character.

The process through which he went was twofold. He was paying a penalty, and purifying himself from legal stains. The second Adam relieved mankind from the legal penalties, but the purification is still needed. Rewards are offered now for virtue, but its practice has not therefore become less obligatory; on the contrary, a higher code of morality is inculcated. To the Jew it was said sternly, Thou shalt not kill; to the Christian

it is said, Little children, love one another. To the Jew it was permitted that he should exact compensation for injuries—an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; to the Christian it is said, that if he would be perfect he should give to those who needed it even what might be deemed necessary for his own use.

But you will perhaps say you do not deny that a life of higher virtue is required from the Christian than from the Jew, and you will ask what has all this to do with convent life? I hope to show you in a few words that convent life, whether embraced by monk or nun, is simply carrying out the teaching of the God of Love to its highest perfection.

The Jew was commanded to obey; the Christian is entreated to obey. We are invited first by the example of our Divine Lord, and next by the words of our Divine Lord, to a life of the highest perfection. By perfecting ourselves, with the help of God's grace, without which we can do nothing, and by the co-operation of our own will, without which God will do nothing for us, we fulfil the end for which we have been 'sent.' It is a noble end—it is a glorious end; it is the only end worthy of an immortal soul to seek to perfect within ourselves the image of God. In proportion as we become more like that image in which we were created, in that proportion do we become truly great. The noblest effort of human intellect is exercised by man when he endea-

vours to comprehend the will of his Creator. Can there be any greater wisdom than to seek to be wise with the wisdom of God? Can there be any sublimer knowledge than the knowledge of God? Is not that man or woman the noblest of our race who has attained to the nearest resemblance to the Creator?

This then is the great object of what is commonly called the religious life, the perfection of the individual; and this perfection is sought after in the way indicated by Christ himself. Religious make three vows: a vow of poverty, a vow of chastity, and a vow of obedience. In the Holy Gospels we find that our Divine Lord gives certain advice or 'counsel' to certain persons, and that He did not give this advice or counsel to others. Hence we conclude that all are not called to the same kind of life. Religious make a vow of poverty. Christ gave them the example. We must believe that had riches been in themselves a real good, our Saviour would have supplied His blessed mother and foster-father with worldly wealth. We must also believe that as He came to be our example as well as our Saviour, that His life was a model of the most perfect kind of life to which we could aspire. But I must again request you to remember that although our Lord gave the example in His own person of the highest kind of life, He did not invite all to follow Him in certain particulars.

For example, He practised the counsel of poverty. Our Saviour declared that He had not where to lay His head, and when money was required to pay a tax He had none, and worked a miracle to procure it. But we do not find that He required all his followers to renounce the possession of money or worldly goods. Joseph of Arimathea was a rich man, and yet we are told expressly that he was a disciple of Jesus. He had not been called to the more perfect life as the rich young man had been whose name we know not, but to whom Jesus Himself addressed these words, 'If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast.' This young man failed to accept the counsel or advice to observe holy poverty. He went away sad. We may believe that he loved Jesus a little, but his conduct proved that he loved money more. He received a special call, and with it we may not doubt a special grace to obey the call. He was called by Christ himself to practise holy poverty, to make that absolute renunciation of all that a nun or monk makes when the vow of poverty is taken. We cannot tell why Joseph of Arimathea was not also called to this higher life—these things are hidden in the counsels of the Eternal.

The next vow is the vow of chastity. It has been most truly observed by the Bishop of Kerry in a recent publication, that the command given by our Divine Lord to the apostles to go forth without scrip or money

in their purses would never have been intended for a married clergy, and even as a question of facilitating work the unmarried state can easily be seen to have the preference. There is, however, a higher view than this. Our Lord Himself gave the example of His love for virginity by being Himself the Virgin Son of the Virgin Mother, and in this command also He called some to its observance and left others free. He appeared at a marriage feast, and thereby sanctioned marriage and placed it amongst the Sacraments of the Church. But there were some whom He Himself called to another and a higher course. There were some who could 'receive the saying,' and others who could not, or for whom it was not intended. And it is to the observance of this counsel that the special prize is granted of following the virgin Lamb hereafter whithersoever he goeth.

The third vow is that of obedience, and this seems to be less understood if possible than either of the others. Yet Jesus practised this virtue in its highest perfection—from His birth until his death—in the very kind and degree of perfection that a religious is called to exercise it.

The history of the holy childhood of our Divine Lord is summed up in the words, 'He was subject to them.' When he commenced his active life, He tells us specially that He began to do the will of Him who sent Him. And the apostle St. Paul, who must have

known incomparably more than we can know of the life and intentions of our Saviour, sums up thus the wonderful history, 'He humbled himself, becoming 'obedient unto death, even the death of the cross;' and then he adds words of deep significance, words which demand our careful and prayerful study, 'For which cause God also hath exalted Him, and hath given Him a name which is above every name.'

CHAPTER XV

MY NOVITIATE—THE VARIOUS OCCUPATIONS OF THE DAY—WE RISE AT FIVE TO IMITATE OUR LORD'S EXAMPLE—MASS AT SEVEN—THE SISTERS SERVE EACH OTHER IN THE REFECTORY—EXPLANATION OF HOW WE FULFIL THE VOW OF POVERTY BY SERVING EACH OTHER, AND THE POOR—WE CONSIDER IT AN HONOUR TO DO THIS—EXPLANATION OF THE PRACTICAL WORKING OF THE VOW OF OBEDIENCE—ITS UTILITY—ITS DIVINE ORIGIN—THE SCHOOLS—SOME ACCOUNT OF THE DAILY OCCUPATIONS IN CONVENTS WHICH I HAVE VISITED—THE SISTERS OF MERCY IN BLANDFORD SQUARE—THE DOMINICANESSES AT STONE—THE DEAF AND DUMB INSTITUTION AT CABRA—ANECDOTES OF OUR CHILDREN.

My object then in seeking admission into the Convent was to take these three vows. The reader will have seen that at least I have the authority of Christ's words for doing so, and that I have the authority of His example, since He Himself both observed these counsels and exhorted others to observe them also. No one could say I was forsaking duties in the world to find new duties for myself in the cloister; and no one can deny that apart from the desire of one's own perfection much more can be done for the poor by the united efforts of a number of persons living together, and acting together.

In most religious houses the time of novitiate lasts for two years and a half. The Council of Trent has

absolutely prohibited any person from making vows until they have spent a full year as a novice; and this regulation, like all the regulations of the Catholic Church, is no dead letter which may be explained away or evaded. If we wish to learn any art or science, we employ masters to teach us who are already skilled therein, and we labour earnestly to profit by their instructions. Thus, on entering the Convent, I found myself placed under the special care of a nun who was called the mistress of novices, and whose one sole duty it was to devote herself to the instruction of the novices. She was to teach them first by her example, and then by her words. The lady to whose care I was confided was about the same age as the Abbess, but no child could have submitted more implicitly to a mother than she did to our young Superior.

We rose at five, and it was not easy or pleasant to leave our warm beds at that early hour in winter; but it was our first act of obedience for the day. We thought of Jesus, who rose 'a great while before day,' and spent long hours, and even nights, in prayer on the desolate mountains of Judea. We, at least, though we tried to imitate Him in this, could never suffer as He had done. We were instructed by our mistress how to meditate, or make mental prayer, and as a general rule no one was allowed to spend any length of time in the choir or to rise at this early hour, until she had been several months in the Convent. Our meditation con

sisted in first reading some verses of Scripture, or of some good book written for the purpose, and then in thinking about what we had read, and praying for grace to imitate the example our divine Lord had given us in the mystery on which we meditated. After meditation we said part of the office. At seven o'clock we heard mass; and on nearly every day we received the body and blood of Jesus in the most holy Sacrament. This, as He Himself had promised, was our life. We were trying to become more like Him by practising the virtues which He had practised; but in our own strength we could do nothing. Here we had our life and the source of our life, so that with St. Paul we could say, 'I live, yet not I, but Christ who liveth in me.'

At eight o'clock the bell rang for breakfast. At each meal one Sister served the rest; and I can most truly say that some of the happiest hours of my life were those in which I had the honour of serving my Sisters. And here I must add a few words of explanation about such duties. You will remember that postulants and novices are preparing to make a vow of poverty, and that the professed religious have made this vow. By this vow we not only gave up, or purposed to give up, any money or valuables which we had, or which we might at any time have, but we also professed our desire to *live* in poverty. The poor are obliged to be the servants of others. We, too, by this vow, desired

to be the servants of each other and of the poor. Hence we could not consider it a degradation to wash plates in the kitchen, to sweep passages, to clean rooms either for ourselves or others, or to attend the Sisters in the refectory as a servant would do. On the contrary, these were the very things which we wished to do, and which by our vow for poverty we had promised to do. But it can easily be understood that if we all chose our own work the confusion would be endless; hence the necessity for obedience to regulate what each should do. Hence, also, the necessity for each to submit cheerfully and willingly to what obedience regulated. If it were left to our own choice, we might have ten serving in the refectory at once, each one in the way of the other, and so with other duties. But we were taught to see something more in obedience than the mere act of submission to a necessary rule.

Protestants are very much shocked when they hear that there are expressions in the rules of Catholic Convents which require the Sisters to obey the voice of the Superior as if it were the voice of God. They forget, or rather they never reflect, that we have the authority of our Lord Himself for what seems to them very like blasphemy. Would to God that in this, and other matters, such persons would take a little trouble to understand us before they utter their verdict of condemnation. It was our Divine Lord Himself who said, 'He that heareth you heareth me.' And

it is obvious that if obedience is to be exercised as a virtue it can only be by obeying for God and in God. No mere *human* obedience of a creature to a creature could be in any way acceptable to the Creator.

After breakfast we each went to the household duties appointed for us. One Sister went to the church or to our choir, which was part of the church, to put away the priests' vestments, and to do such daily cleaning and dusting as might be necessary. Another went to the kitchen to superintend and assist in the domestic duties there. Each was satisfied that she was doing God's will. One was serving our Lord directly in His Sacramental presence on the altar, the other was serving Him not the less in the person of His spouses. As I have said the one great glory of our lives, and their one object, should be to do that for which we are 'sent.' It is not the act in itself which glorifies God and benefits our souls, but the intention with which we do the act, and the certainty that the act is that which God Himself requires from us at that particular time. Do not say that God cannot care whether a nun is in the kitchen cooking the dinner at a particular time, or whether she is at the altar preparing it for the next morning's Mass. God has told us Himself that He does care. He has counted the hairs of our head, and knows when even one sparrow falls to the ground. We shall only know in the next world the mystery of life,

and the important connection between the momentous realities of eternity and what seem to us the trifles of time.

I think it is our own George Herbert who has said :—

> Who sweeps a room as for thy laws
> Makes that and the action fine.

If we are engaged in any other occupation, no matter how sublime or how useful in itself, than that which God asks from us at the particular time, we are not fulfilling the end for which we have been 'sent.'

A certain time was allowed for our domestic duties, and then we assembled to hear a lecture read from some religious work, or perhaps some portion of the Rule was read, and the Abbess or Mistress of Novices gave us an instruction on it. Our Superior was peculiarly gifted in this way, and we prized a few words from her more than I can tell.

At ten the novices went to the schools, each to her appointed class. As the Order to which I belong is strictly enclosed the schools are our great work, and we make a special vow to teach the poor. But though we cannot leave our enclosure to visit them, as some other Orders do, we still find many other ways of helping our neighbours.

Besides giving out simple medicines and food, and clothes to the children, we also give out blankets and coal in winter, and thus we come in contact with the

very class who generally require instruction most, and are most ready to profit by it. Several Sisters had a few poor women who came to them from time to time for instruction. I had on Sundays a class, or rather a large room full, of young women for this purpose. It was very interesting work. I soon knew them all by name, and when in a few years I went on a foundation to the Convent where I now live, I shall never forget the parting scene. They knew that as a nun, having made a vow of poverty, I could take nothing for myself, and indeed I wanted nothing, for I wished to be poor like Jesus. But their affection would not let them rest until they had found some means of testifying it. At last they thought of purchasing some very beautiful vases for the altar, and thus made me the medium of offering them to God. Perhaps there could scarcely be a more beautiful exemplification of the meaning and working of the vow of poverty, or of how thoroughly it is appreciated and understood by the poor. The offering was not the less precious to me because it passed at once from my hands to His service to whom I had given my all. The schools were not dismissed until late in the afternoon, so that the whole day was spent, not as Protestants suppose in idleness, but in real active laborious work for the poor. It has been my privilege to have visited many convents before I entered the one in which I am now a professed nun. Their

work is before the world, and may be seen at any time. What wilful prejudice must there be in those who refuse to believe that a nun labours for the good of others. I have seen the Sisters of Mercy in Blandford Square, London, going forth two and two, like the disciples sent by Christ, on their mission of love to the abodes of sorrow and death. I have seen the schools where they toil, I might almost say day and night, for poor humanity. I have seen the Ursulines at Moorfields, and afterwards near Oxford, where they now reside, devoting themselves with the unwearied care of so many mothers to the often anxious toil of educating young ladies. These labours only cease in their graves. You may dismiss a poor school and its cares at a certain hour, but you can never, except during a brief vacation, dismiss the care of those who reside with you.

I have seen the Dominicanesses at Stone, in Staffordshire, employed in every variety of intellectual and manual labour. I have seen a nun there at one time serving in the refectory or sweeping the cloisters, and in half an hour after retiring to their splendid library to devote her rare talents to literary labours of no common value. But the work which attracted me most of all, after our own Infant School, for which I may be pardoned a little natural partiality, was the Institution for the Deaf and Dumb at Cabra, near Dublin, conducted entirely by Dominican nuns. I can never forget the

day that I spent visiting that Convent. The strange deep silence of the immense schoolroom, only broken by the plaintive utterances of the poor mutes, seemed to me too mournful to bear; and yet these nuns bear it day after day, and year after year. The Mother Prioress conducted me to this part of the Convent, and then left me with the nun who had charge of it. This lady had gone to Paris to be trained for the purpose of imparting instruction to the poor mutes, and nobly, most nobly, did she fulfil her mission. She, in her turn, trained other Sisters, and they helped her to train the children.

There was something in this lady's expression which I can never forget. She looked to me as if she lived in heaven, and was less here than there. I observed her very closely, but she seemed perfectly unconscious of my observation. Yet her eye was quick enough to catch the least movement or look of her charge. I think she had no thoughts for anything except for them and for God. I believe she has since gone to America to found similar institutions there. The knowledge of the children and their intelligence was wonderful. There was scarcely a question in the catechism, on Bible history, in grammar, geography, or general information, which they could not answer promptly in writing on the black board, or on their slates. You may understand something of what I have said about vocations to convents, as well as to orders,

when I tell you that much as I admired all this, and much as I honoured those who devoted themselves to such a work, yet it was not my choice. There are many flowers in God's garden of religion, and He plants them where He wills. Their beauty and their fragrance depend on their being placed in the fitting soil, and receiving the fitting culture; and those who trust simply in Him, and only desire His will, may be assured that He will bring them sooner or later to their temporary resting-place on earth, as well as to their eternal resting-place in heaven.

One of the nuns in the Convent where I made my vows was very old. She had spent years in religion; and I think she was one of the most uniformly cheerful persons I have ever known. I love to think of her now in her heavenly home. To me she was specially attractive, and specially kind. I saw at once a great likeness in her to the aged relative I had left; and when I told her this, she seemed to wish to lavish all the love of her loving heart on me, to console me as far as she could do so for the painful separation. I think I see her now, and hear the little 'hem' she used to give at the foot of the stairs when she wanted some one to help her up. I used always to come if within hearing, though she would never let me help her; and would wait for one of the 'strong ones.' But I liked even to see her, though she would not speak if it was the time of silence.

This lady told me once a sad story of a deaf and dumb girl. She was a Catholic, but of course quite uninstructed, and her parents were persuaded to send her to a Protestant deaf and dumb institution. The poor girl learned to read and write, but she learned also the most bitter hatred of the religion of her parents. The Anglican clergyman who visited the institution finding her very intelligent, and fearing she would become a practical Catholic on her return home, placed the vilest anti-Catholic publications in her hands. Every lie that has ever been invented about priests and nuns was poured into this poor girl's mind. The dumb are generally intense in their feelings and passions, and her hatred of priests, nuns, and popery, was all that her misguided instructors could desire. Soon after her return home, the nuns had established an industrial school. The old nun whom I have mentioned took a great share in the instruction, for she worked beautifully. The poor dumb girl had not been taught any way of earning her bread, and with great difficulty she was persuaded to come to the convent for instruction. This dear old nun soon attracted her. No one could resist her bright loving look and gentle smile. After a time they began to converse on a slate, and by degrees the poor girl's prejudices were all removed. She was quick enough to suggest that as all she had been told about nuns and convents had proved utterly false, most likely what she was told about the Catholic

religion was equally untrue. In a few months both her prejudice and her ignorance were removed, and she became a good and fervent Catholic.

I should like to say something about our infant school, our dear, bright, joyous little ones, whose only punishment is to be kept at home, and who waken their mothers at, sometimes, rather unreasonable hours, with cries of ''tool, 'tool,' for many of them are such perfect babies they cannot express in any other way the word school, and their desire to get there as quickly as possible.

There was one child, Susan ——, in whom I took a special interest. When I asked her why she was absent from school any day—and she was the only child who was not regular in my class—she would always say, 'mother was ill.' I saw nothing pleased her more than to ask about her mother, whom she evidently idolised; and I soon found the affection was mutual.

She was a delicate child, the mother was delicate, and, indeed, the whole family were suffering from actual want of common necessaries, the too frequent cause of death and disease amongst the poor. At last I missed my little Susan for several days. She was very ill and had been taken to the workhouse. Just before she died, we had established an industrial school, and even the youngest children were encouraged to do a little work by getting a few pence for what to us was perfectly useless. It trained them into habits of

industry, and gave them help without pauperising them by giving them money for nothing. Susan had worked hard out of school hours and saved a few shillings. She wanted shoes badly, and out of the pence she gave her mother she had kept a penny or two each time to buy the much wanted article. Dear little Susan, she was going now where the streets are paved with gold, where the dirt and defilement of earth could never weary her more. The father and mother came up together the evening before she died. They were allowed to stay with her all night, but as the darkness came on the thoughtful child remembered the little ones at home, and asked who would get their supper. Her poor father had to go. When he left, Susan turned to her mother and said, 'Poor father, he looks so bare; I don't want the shoes now, mother, give the money to father to help to get him a coat; you will find it in a hole in the wall.' She died a few hours after, and the poor mother came to us next morning to tell us Susan's last words were about the nuns, and how she hoped to meet them in heaven.

Many of our dearest little ones have gone there, and almost invariably their last thought has been about us. The nuns and the angels, the convent and heaven, the love of Jesus for little ones, and our love for them, seemed to be all one thought in their innocent minds. One of our most promising children was a Protestant. She had taken a great fancy to our Superior,

who until compelled to desist by ill health, had spent much time in training the infants. We were very careful that neither Janie nor the sisters who accompanied her should be interfered with in any way as to their religious training, and much to their annoyance they were always sent into the playground when the other children were receiving religious instruction. Little Janie, I fear, knew nothing or but little of Heaven or of Jesus, but she drew her own conclusions as children will, and thought wherever Reverend Mother was, must be a happy place. When she was dying—for two years ago scarlatina took off many of our precious little ones—all her thoughts were to know, Would she be sure to see Reverend Mother, and would she be like her when she died? The mother, the wife of a very comfortable farmer, has died since, and all the children are now sent to the Protestant school, the poor father having been threatened by the Protestant clergyman with all kinds of danger, temporal and spiritual, if he allowed his children to remain with us. Little Janie's mother was so attached to us, that she actually called one of her children Mary Catherine, after the nun who had charge of the infant school.

This Sister told me a very touching scene which she witnessed not long ago. The mother of some of our children, a warm-hearted Irishwoman, Mrs. Sullivan, went to America, hoping as she said to stay a

year or two, and send something home to her husband and family from that El Dorado of the Celt. Mr. Sullivan was a pensioner, and did not like leaving the country, as he would thereby be deprived of his pension. Her great trouble was leaving her youngest little girl, a wee thing of two or three, who was carried daily to school by her elder sisters. After several years' absence, Mrs. Sullivan returned; she had not been as fortunate as she expected, and she pined for home. As she arrived during school hours, her first visit was to us. Her little ones were in the playground, and the mother knew her own at a glance. The Sister who was in charge, told me she could scarcely refrain from tears. The mother kissed the child again and again, she kissed her lips, her eyes, her hands, her feet, then she would put her down for a minute as if to look at her and feel sure it was 'herself,' and then she would pour out all the mother's wealth of her love on her again.

But the treasure was soon to be taken from her. Annie was one of the victims to the fatal epidemic. As she lay dying, the mother, mother-like, hid her wild grief lest it should disturb her darling, and told her in her own fashion of all she would have in Heaven. 'And Annie, darling, you'll see Jesus that died for you, and loves you, Annie, and His beautiful Mother that loved Him so and broke her poor heart when He was dying. And sure, darling, you'll want for nothing

there, and you'll have plenty to eat, and beautiful clothes, and sofas to 'lie on,' but ever and anon as the mother ran on, little Annie interrupted her consolations with asking the question nearest her heart, 'But, mother, what will I do for the nuns? will I see the nuns?' The priest had been sent for. The little one was old enough to know right from wrong, though scarcely of an age to make her first confession. But he had been called elsewhere and there was some delay. An elder child, however, said the Acts of Contrition, and the simple acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity, which she had been taught at school, and told her to tell Jesus she was sorry for ever having offended Him, that she loved Him with her whole heart, and that she wished to be with Him in Heaven. And thus our Annie was garnered safe in the Eternal Fold, and there she waits and prays for the nuns in whom her young heart ever was so firmly centred.

But if I were to tell you all about our treasures you would weary, and I must remember that I cannot expect a stranger to care for them as we do, though I doubt not that you also love Jesus, and will love them with us for His sake. Has He not said to you as well as to us, that He will reward even a cup of cold water given to His little ones? Will you blame us when He has promised such rewards for so trifling a service, if we, not for the sake of reward, but for His own dear sake, wish to give many cups of cold water,

and many gifts of time, and care, and labour to those who are so precious to our Saviour?

And these little ones also can show charity to others. It is not many weeks ago since a very young child was remarked rolling up the piece of bread given her in the middle of the day. Her younger brothers and sisters ate their pieces at once, but she never touched hers. At last a Sister asked her why she did it. 'I want it for mother,' was the reply; 'father has no work, and she gives all her bread to baby.' Another piece was given to her at once for herself, but it was with difficulty the loving little thing was prevented from keeping that for mother also. The almost ravenous eagerness with which she ate the bread showed what a sacrifice she was making for mother.

Sometimes we have very amusing scenes with our little charge, and sometimes very sad ones. We have cruel mothers who beat and curse their children, and, maddened by the demon drink, do their best to ruin the souls and bodies of their offspring. We have one sad, pale-faced, plaintive child, who is quite crippled. Her father flung her down a steep stair in one of his drunken passions, and a man at other times kind enough, and even gentle in his manner, has thus injured his child hopelessly for life.

Not long since, the children were assembled in the large parish church to be instructed by the priests preparatory to confirmation. All were intent and busy. Our three

priests had each his division, and we were gratified day by day with good reports, and assurances that our labour in teaching catechism was by no means lost. But Catholic priests are never satisfied with a mere routine knowledge; and though they require that the children should know their catechism word for word, since, if they know it, they must be really well taught their religion, still they like to test the children's comprehension by general questions. One of our girls, Mary ——, a peculiarly quaint, prim little thing, was asked, 'Why did God tell Adam and Eve not to eat the forbidden fruit?' She hesitated a moment, and then with her little curtsey, made in a style as peculiar as her answering, replied, 'To teach them manners, sir.' The priest found it difficult to recover his gravity for long after, and the children laughed aloud, but the little girl never for a moment thought any one was laughing at her reply. Doubtless she would have supposed that too great a breach of manners for any one to commit.

Last summer a strict prohibition was issued against any child bringing apples to school, or at least eating them during school hours. The following day, very much to the surprise of the Mistress of Schools, Mary was seen taking stolen bites out of a sour-looking crab. The Sister at once asked how she could be so disobedient. Her reply was characteristic. 'If you please, ma'am, when I was coming along, ma'am, I saw a crab-apple tree, ma'am, and I said to myself,

ma'am, I'd just take three apples, and then I remembered what you said, ma'am, but as I promised myself I'd take them, I didn't like to tell a lie to myself, so I just took them, ma'am.' The child was perfectly serious, and the Sister had some difficulty in explaining to her how to reconcile her ideas of truth with the necessity for obedience.

CHAPTER XVI.

CONTINUATION OF THE ACCOUNT OF A NUN'S DAILY OCCUPATION — RECREATION—THE CONVERSATION OF NUNS—INTELLECTUAL CULTURE OF NUNS—PROOF THAT THEY MUST BE, AS A GENERAL RULE, HIGHLY EDUCATED — SOME ACCOUNT OF THE CEREMONY OF RECEPTION OR TAKING THE WHITE VEIL—THE NOVICE IS QUESTIONED PUBLICLY AND REPLIES PUBLICLY—DANTE'S 'PURGATORY'—NUNS ARE NOT ALL PERFECT, THOUGH LIVING IN A STATE IN WHICH THEY AIM AT PERFECTION—TAKING THE BLACK VEIL—EXPLANATION OF THE VOWS—VOWS ARE OF DIFFERENT KINDS—VOWS MUST BE MADE TO A LAWFULLY-CONSTITUTED AUTHORITY—DISPENSATIONS FROM VOWS.

But I have wandered far away from the subject with which I began the last chapter, and must now briefly conclude the detail of our daily occupations. You will see, at least, that our life is not an idle one; and I believe there is not a convent throughout the world, of whatever order, or however occupied, which could not furnish many volumes of interesting details regarding their various charges. Some would tell you of their poor children; some of the girls in higher stations, whom they had educated, and in whose well-being they never cease to take an interest; some would give you mournful histories of the insane or idiotic; some would record the fervent and deep contrition of their penitents; some would give glorious accounts of happy

death-beds, and others would gladden your heart with the records of missionary labours.

After dinner we have recreation for an hour, and on some days for a longer period. And here it was that I was so much struck with the difference between Protestant Sisters and Catholic nuns. There is a freedom and a joy about a nun's recreation which her poor Anglican imitator cannot attain. So very much has been said and written, even by those who might be supposed to be better informed about the mental calibre of a nun, that it might be supposed the very fact of becoming one at once reduced us to a state of imbecility, or that the ranks of religious orders were recruited from lunatic asylums. My experience of nuns has been that they are rather above, than below, the average of female intellectual development.

It should be remembered that a considerable number of nuns in England are obliged to undergo the regular examinations of Government inspectors to ascertain their capabilities for teaching; hence they cannot be uneducated. In Ireland, although the nuns are not subject to such examination, a considerable number of the convent schools are under the National Board, and the nuns are the teachers of those monitors whose fitness is tested by the severest examinations, and of those children who are examined regularly and strictly by Government inspectors, Protestant or Catholic. Further, some of the highest Catholic families in Eng-

land and Ireland send their daughters to be educated in convent schools; and when these ladies go into society, they are not found inferior either in accomplishments or culture to Protestant girls of the same standing. All this must surely prove that the great majority of nuns are educated women.

As far as my own experience goes, I have remarked as a general rule, that it is precisely the most intellectual and thoughtful girl in a family of sisters who chooses the life of a nun. She has aspirations and longings which the world cannot satisfy; and who will dare to say that aspirations after the Eternal are not the noblest of which mind is capable? I might appeal to antiquity, and to the long-abused middle ages, and show that the cloister has always been the home of learning and the nurturer of intellect; but this would be beside my present purpose. In the nineteenth century it may suffice to say that those who train others in the higher paths of human learning can scarcely be themselves destitute of the knowledge they impart. I think there has been a very recent and very convincing proof to the contrary. The Lord Chief Justice felt bound to compliment the nuns who gave evidence in the Saurin case; and the lady who was the occasion of it was the only one who failed to give proof of intellectual superiority.

Any non-Catholic work with which I am acquainted, whether professing to be a narrative of personal experi-

ence, or a mere novel, represents the conversations of nuns as frivolous to the last degree. They are supposed to be in a state of isolation from their fellow creatures, which, as a necessary consequence, would produce pettiness of thought, and word, and act. Never was there a more untrue accusation. When a family meet together at certain hours of the day for mutual intercourse and enjoyment, they do not form themselves into a social science congress, and commence discussing ethics, or political economy. Family subjects are the subjects of family conversation. The object, whether avowed or not, is general relaxation; and such is precisely the object of convent recreation. We have other hours for scientific pursuits, for studies, for prayer, and for penitential exercises. The recreation is, what it is intended to be, recreation. I have joined many a happy family circle in the world, but I do not think I ever enjoyed any social gathering as I have enjoyed, and do enjoy, our convent recreations. I have listened to the conversation of many men of brilliant wit, who have kept a dinner-table in unceasing mirth by their sallies, and I do not think, seriously and soberly, that I ever heard half as amusing conversations at such times as I have heard amongst our own Sisters. Happiness in itself engenders mirth; and whatever the world may say or think now, it will know hereafter that the truest, and perhaps the only

really true happiness, in a mere human point of view, may be found within a convent.

But it will be said perhaps, are there not unhappy nuns?—nuns who are weary of the convent, and only longing to be free?—nuns like Miss Saurin, who are unhappy, or consider themselves so, and who must be miserable? I have just tried to count how many nuns I have known personally and intimately; in this computation I do not include those whom I have only seen once or twice. I think I can truly say I have known nearly two hundred, and I do not know one who is even in the least degree unhappy. I am quite sure I do not know one who would not offer up the sacrifice of her life freely and joyously sooner than forsake her convent. How is it if nuns are so unhappy as some persons suppose, that they invariably refuse to leave their cloisters when freed by revolutionists, until they are driven to do so by brute force?

After recreation we said Vespers and Compline. Then we had another half hour for spiritual reading. An hour in the evening was generally devoted to study by the Sisters engaged in the schools, or if any novice was deficient in any of the subjects which she had to teach, it was the duty of the Mistress of Novices to instruct her in it fully. We had recreation again in the evening, and the day closed with several hours in the choir, during which we said Matins and Lauds, and made our evening meditations. Surely we were

at least as well employed during the day as the 'Girl of the Period;' and surely if our Divine Lord's words are true that He will reward every act of charity done for His sake to others, we may look for a crown hereafter to which she does not aspire.

After the postulant has spent six months learning the rules of the convent and the duties of a nun, she is allowed to receive the white veil, and becomes a novice. But before she can take this step, the Professed Sisters have each a vote to give, and they are perfectly free to choose or reject her, as she on her side is perfectly free to ask to be received or to leave the convent. It is now that she takes the first solemn step towards the attainment of her desire to become the Bride of Christ. I am aware that to a non-Catholic these words sound strange and unreal. But let such at least remember that we do but use the mystical language of Scripture, and that we do indeed believe that certain souls are called by God to devote themselves as virgins to the service of the Virgin Lamb. Has not He Himself promised a special reward to those who do so? Has not He himself called the Church His Bride, and must not that be true of a part which is true of the whole?

The ceremony of Reception differs slightly in different Orders, but the substance and intention is the same in each. The postulant is attired in bridal costume to indicate that she desires to offer herself

as a Bride upon the altar of God. She stands within the sanctuary during Mass as the most appropriate place for one who wishes to live ever within the sanctuary of religion. She receives the most Holy Sacrament to strengthen her in the resolutions she is about to make. In the presence of all her friends, of as many of the nearest relatives as can attend the ceremony, and before the most Holy Sacrament, she is solemnly questioned by the Bishop as to whether she has a clear knowledge of the austerities, labours, and obligations of the Order she is about to join, and she, further, in many Orders, makes a statement that she desires and requests to be admitted on trial. All this is done at a public ceremony before many hundred witnesses, and the questions of the Bishop and replies of the postulant are spoken aloud. Thus it would be an act of the gravest malice, and an act indeed which it could not be supposed that any sane person would commit if false replies were given by the postulant, or if she expressed an ardent desire and entreaty to be allowed to become a novice if she had not been happy during her time of being a postulant.

When the postulant has openly and solemnly declared her request, the Bishop proceeds to bless the religious habit which she is about to receive. The *Veni Creator* is said afterwards, and in some enclosed Orders a very beautiful and expressive ceremony follows. The Bishop leads the postulant

to the grate or carved screen which divides the nuns' choir from the church, and knocks three times at the gate, saying, 'My Sisters, open your gates, and admit this sister of Christ.' At the third appeal the Abbess opens the grate, and the Sisters are seen kneeling at each side with lighted tapers in their hands. The Bishop then says, 'Arise, virgins, trim ye your lamps, and go forth to meet the Bridegroom.' The Sisters reply, 'At midnight a cry was heard, Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye forth to meet Him.' And in truth in these few words is contained all the meaning and beauty of this ceremony.

It is a mystical going forth to meet the Bridegroom. The postulant is casting aside her worldly attire, anticipating the day when there shall be no need for earthly raiment, for the Lamb Himself will provide the wedding garments for His dear ones. She anticipates the day when there will be neither marrying nor giving in marriage, by professing her desire to renounce domestic ties, happy and blessed as they are for those who are not called to a higher state. She anticipates the day when those on the right hand shall be especially crowned for works of mercy done for the Bridegroom's love to His people here on earth, and chooses not to devote part of her time, and thoughts, and money, to so blessed a work, but rather to give it her all. She anticipates the day of His coming also by preferring to share His tears and His

suffering life now, for He Himself has said that those who suffer with Him here shall reign with Him hereafter.

And then as the gate is closed, and the postulant leaves the world without, and enters the portals of that home where she shall be fitted day by day in patient faith and prayer for the eternal mansions, the choir chaunts forth in mingled strains of sweetness and sadness — for are they not also still in exile? — the *In exitu Israel de Ægypto.* Truly it is the going out from Egypt, but not yet is she within sight of the promised land, and one might almost expect to see the angel

Trattando l' aere con l' eterne penne,

and the spirit wafted by angel ministers into the port of religion,—that port which they also enter as the spirit in Dante's 'Purgatory,' in the small swift bark of love. Well may they say,

What in the remainder of that hymn is writ,

and rejoice that they have passed through many a storm and tempest to the haven where they would be.

The postulant is now clothed in the religious habit, and exactly like the professed religious, except that her veil is white, and she does not receive the ring until she makes her vows. The most important period of her whole life has now commenced; every moment is precious. She has still at least a year, but in by far the largest number of convents she has two years for

careful and prayerful consideration. During this time surely she has ample opportunity for making her choice, and if even she were to repent it later, she has no one to blame but herself. Surely there is no state, or choice of a state in life in which persons have so many opportunities of testing their future.

As a general rule, Protestants appear to have the most opposite, and the most contradictory ideas about a nun's life. One class of persons suppose that all nuns are, if not the most wicked, at least the most weak and contemptible of their sex; another class seem to think that a nun must be a perfect Catholic, and if any one acts as a poor religious has done in a recent case, they at once exclaim that the sanctity which has existed only in their imagination, has utterly failed. Now, no Catholic ever supposes that all nuns are perfect. I have known nuns myself who were less perfect than others, and in some respects fell short of the high perfection to which by their profession they were supposed to aspire — nuns who gave way to little infirmities of temper, to slight faults against their vow of poverty, and to some degree of self-will contrary to their vow of obedience. If you will read any book on the religious state — there are many in English and very many in French—you will find that nuns are addressed in them not on the supposition of being perfect, but on the supposition that they are trying to be perfect.

Star differs from star in glory; there are degrees of rewards for degrees of virtue, according to our Divine Lord's own declaration. Some Christians live more like their Master than other Christians, and will be therefore crowned with brighter crowns in the heavenly kingdom. But as there are different states in life, some higher and some lower, so are there different states in the Church. According to Scripture it is a higher and more perfect *state* to embrace virginity than to engage in marriage. Yet in the records of the Catholic Church, we find some married saints who have been canonised, and we know that the fact of being a nun does not canonise. Thus, it will be seen, that by being a nun, for the love of God, when a person has a vocation, she is placed in a higher or more perfect state, but it depends on correspondence with this vocation, whether the reward hereafter shall be greater or less. A nun is surrounded with helps to attain a high degree of sanctity; it depends on herself how far these helps will avail for that end. Very much, if not all her future, depends on how she spends the time of her novitiate. If she devotes herself to learning the true spirit of the vows which she hopes to make at her profession, then it is probable that she will keep these vows as faithfully as human frailty will permit, and that she will daily, with God's help, observe them more and more perfectly.

It is not easy to practise this perfect obedience, and

this entire poverty. It is not a lesson which can be learned in a day, a month, or a year. Even apostles had to struggle with the evil within them long years after their conversion. They struggled and obtained the mastery, and thus it is with by far the larger number of nuns. They strive with the 'old Adam and the Eve within,' and by God's grace, they conquer and daily become more and more like the new Adam and the new Eve. But some few there will always be whose victories are rare, and whose falls are many. And rarely indeed—thank God, so rarely, that in centuries but one or two cases will appear—there are those who utterly lose the spirit of their holy state, and to whom obedience becomes a burden, and poverty an intolerable bondage.

At the conclusion of the appointed time the profession takes place. Two months before this event the novice is required to see the bishop alone, or some priest appointed by him, in order that he may carefully examine her, as ordered by the Council of Trent. The abbess, and the mistress of novices, also must carefully examine her, all for the same purpose, to be assured if she really desires to take this solemn step. Human prudence could not do more; and one could not suppose that any lady would be so infatuated, or so wicked, as to declare solemnly that she wished to make vows which would bind her for life, unless her wish was genuine. Of course, as there are no limits to human

depravity, such a thing might be done; but I believe human depravity would not easily deceive itself and others into a course involving so much self-sacrifice.

Each professed Sister also has a vote, which she gives by ballot; and unless the novice who wishes to be professed has a majority of votes, she is at once dismissed. Thus both parties are protected.

Of the ceremony of profession I need not say much. The novice is again obliged to state her desire publicly; she is again asked publicly if she wishes to make these solemn vows; and when she has made this solemn and public declaration of her desire, she is then allowed to vow herself to the observance of poverty, chastity, and obedience. In some active orders there is a further vow made of devotion to the service of the poor. In the contemplative, or cloistered, orders, there is a vow of enclosure.

As the subject of vows seems to be altogether misunderstood by non-Catholics, and as the Saurin case has given rise to much misapprehension, I shall here give a brief explanation. We know that in merely human transactions, a vow is considered still more binding than a promise; and that when a life-long engagement is about to take place between two persons, as in marriage, a vow is considered the most binding and fitting means of testifying the intention. In the Old Testament we find that religious vows were made, and were sanctioned, and considered acceptable

to God. In the New Testament, also, we read of religious vows, such as that made by St. Paul. Now if it be granted that our Divine Lord has called, and does call, certain persons to observe the counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience, it will be seen at once that by binding themselves to the observance of these counsels by vow, they greatly enhance the value of their offering. To explain this more fully, let us suppose the not uncommon case of a master who has lost, through his fault or misfortune, the vast estate he once possessed. He is obliged to dismiss all his servants, for he can no longer pay them their wages. But one of these servants says, 'Sir, I will serve you for nothing for a time, or perhaps indeed I may serve you for many years, or all my life, if I can;' the other says, 'Sir, you have been a good master to me, and I vow that I will serve you all my life.' You will surely see that the latter has shown the greatest love for his master, and the greatest self-devotion. Now, it is true that our heavenly Master does not require our services, but He is pleased to act as if He did. He could with a thought feed all the hungry, and clothe all the naked in the world. But He does not will to do so; and if we believe the Scriptures at all, we cannot deny that He has promised to give special rewards to those who, for His sake, perform these acts of charity. How much more acceptable to Him must be the love and service of those who by vow devote themselves entirely to Him.

Let us also remember that He accepts this service as done immediately to *Himself*. Who can read the fifteenth chapter of the gospel of St. Matthew, and deny that Christ has placed the poor on earth as His representatives, and that the special condemnation of the wicked shall be that they have failed to feed and clothe, and minister to Him in their persons?

Having now explained what a religious vow is, and in what light it is understood by nuns, I shall proceed to explain the different kinds of vows. There are simple vows and solemn vows; vows made for life, and vows made for a short period only. Again I will explain my meaning by an illustration. When I made my vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, they were received by the bishop as the delegate of Him to whom I made them. Just as our Divine Lord has placed the poor in His stead on earth that we may minister to Him in their persons, so has He placed the priests of the Church in His stead that we may receive through them, as His representatives, the graces which He wishes to bestow on us; that we may offer through them, to Him, our obedience.

Let us again suppose the case of the master and the servant. If this servant went to some friend or neighbour, and made to him this solemn promise or vow of serving his master, it would be a strange way of acting. Common sense would suggest, 'Go to the master himself. He will care little for all your promises to

another, unless you make them to himself, and give him the personal assurance of your services.' But if this master heard of the wish of his good servant, and being unable to receive his offers of service himself, sent some one, duly authorised by him to receive them, then the case would be at once altered. The servant might make the promise to his master's son, and it would be none the less truly made to the master himself. Thus it is that a religious vow must be made, not to any one who may call himself a bishop or a priest, but to one really authorised by God to fulfil these solemn offices.

The Pope, as the head of the Church, has authority to act for Christ, whom he represents on earth. Hence the Pope, and the Pope alone, can decide questions which refer directly to the engagements or vows made directly to our Divine Lord. The holy see has made what may be called an arbitrary distinction between vows, some being called solemn, and some simple. I use the word arbitrary, because the distinction has depended solely on the will and pleasure of the holy see, and not on anything in the vow itself. The practical difference is this, as shown, for example, in the Saurin case:—simple vows may be dispensed by the bishop of the diocese, solemn vows can only be dispensed by the holy see. Nuns belonging to the active orders generally make simple vows; nuns belonging to enclosed, or contemplative, orders make solemn vows.

Vows also may be made either for life, or for a limited period. As a general rule, nuns make vows for life; but I believe the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul only make them from year to year. On these subjects, however, I write under correction of ecclesiastical authorities.

I am fully aware, however, that the impression—or, as I believe Dr. Newman calls it, the Protestant tradition—which supposes that many nuns are unhappy and wish to be released from their vows, can never be entirely satisfied that it is otherwise. A friend has lately drawn my attention to the *Promessi Sposi* as a proof that even in the present century nuns may be professed who have no real vocation for the religious life. But it should be remembered that Manzoni was a deist for several years, and even as a Catholic his was only an individual opinion. Undoubtedly some few nuns may be drawn into the cloister unwisely, but how few are they in comparison with the thousands who make unhappy marriages.

CHAPTER XVII.

A CONVENT NOVITIATE—SOME ACCOUNT OF TWO LADIES WHO WERE SENT FROM THE CONVENT, AND THE CAUSE OF THEIR UNFITNESS FOR OUR LIFE—TRIALS OF MY NOVITIATE—TWO INSTANCES GIVEN OF THIS—AN ANECDOTE OF TWO OLD NUNS — ILLNESS AND DEATH OF A RELIGIOUS — THE THOUGHTFUL CARE AND LOVE OF HER SUPERIOR — DEVOTION OF THE SUPERIOR TO THE SISTERS IN SICKNESS—CONVENTUAL REGULATIONS—ELECTIONS, HOW THEY ARE CONDUCTED—THE ANNUAL VISITATION—IMPORTANCE OF THIS REGULATION—AN INSTANCE OF ITS PRACTICAL WORKING—THE SUPERIOR EVEN MORE RESTRAINED BY THE RULES THAN THOSE WHOM SHE GOVERNS — THE REGULATIONS MADE BY THE CHURCH FOR CONVENT DISCIPLINE CANNOT BE EXPLAINED AWAY—THE ORDINARY CONFESSOR AND THE EXTRAORDINARY CONFESSOR—THE ROMANTIC VIEW OF CONVENT LIFE — ST. FRANCIS OF SALES AND 'ECHOES' — TRUE ROMANCE AND FALSE ROMANCE — TENNYSON'S ST. AGNES'S EVE—MIRACLES STILL OCCUR—AN ACCOUNT OF TWO MIRACULOUS CURES, ONE IN A CONVENT IN IRELAND, AND ONE IN A CONVENT IN ITALY.

My aged relative, Mrs. Grace, died a few months before I made my vows. Some property, which was under settlement, and therefore could not be willed away from me, came then into my possession. I knew that the nuns were in great need of temporary help for the completion of a new building; and as I hoped so soon to make my vows, and renounce for ever all that I possessed, I was very anxious to give a few hundred pounds at once. The bishop would not hear of it, and even seemed angry that my wish should have been

listened to for a moment by any of the Sisters. I merely mention this to show how strict Catholic bishops are in not allowing a novice to involve herself in any way before her profession, lest the votes, or her freedom of action at that all-important moment, should be fettered in any way.

The time of my novitiate passed quickly and happily. I learned day by day more and more of the beauty of that life which is most like the life of angels. But years may pass away ere a nun can fully understand all her privileges and all the graces which surround her. As we advance in human knowledge step by step, so also do we advance in the science of the saints. As we learn human wisdom with difficulty, and after many mistakes, so do we also learn heavenly wisdom, not without some difficulty and suffering. In the words of inspiration, 'the corruptible body is a load upon the soul; and who shall know thy thought except thou give wisdom, and send thy Holy Spirit from above: and so the ways of them that are upon earth may be corrected, and men may learn the things that please thee' (*Wisdom* ix.). Here in our quiet novitiate we learned day by day, by precept, by example, and by practice, to submit our will to the will of another in trifles, and in greater matters, that we might become more like Him who was obedient unto death. Here we learned to purify ourselves from all excessive attachment to earthly things, that we might give our whole

hearts' love to Jesus. Here we learned to practise poverty in our food, in our raiment, in attending on ourselves and on others, that we might become more like Him who had not where to lay His head.

During my novitiate, several ladies came and went. One only remained a few weeks as a postulant, and soon proved herself utterly unfit for taking a vow of poverty, as she manifestly considered it a degradation to sweep her cell or make her bed. When she would not do this for herself, what hope was there that she would ever do it for others? Another lady remained until near the time when she should have made her vows. Her entreaties to be allowed to persevere were so earnest that the Sisters could not bear to send her away. But she also manifested in another way a thorough unfitness for our life. One of her greatest faults was that she could never be punctual to any duty. Whether it was meals in the refectory, or office in the choir, or a class in the school, she was invariably late, perhaps not more than four or five minutes; but I doubt if she was ever once in time for any one duty. How absurd, some of my readers may say; what matter about a few minutes; could you not have put up with her? The question was not about *our* putting up with her; she was an exceedingly amiable person; but there was some One much higher than an abbess or a bishop, whose service she was thus neglecting. If she had been really in earnest in her desire to make a vow of obedience, could she

not have conquered this fault? It gave bad example to others, and we all know how all-powerful is the force of example. It showed a certain want of steadiness of purpose; and steadiness of purpose is absolutely essential for a nun. Besides, no religious house, and indeed no public institution, could be carried on even with comfort to all concerned therein unless each observed the strictest punctuality. What would be said to a soldier who was habitually five minutes late on parade, or to a civil servant of the crown habitually late at his office?

It was remarkable, also, that of these two ladies — whom I mention merely because they both occur to me at the moment, for I might mention many other cases — one was wealthy and accustomed to all the luxuries and comforts of life, and yet she was not only willing but anxious to do every kind of domestic duty even beyond her strength; the other lady's social position was far inferior, and I suspect at home she had done many things which she seemed to consider beneath her in the cloister. Anyone with even the shadow of such a thought was manifestly unfit to make a vow of poverty.

Still, it must be remembered, that in a Catholic novitiate, a very broad distinction is made between occasional failures and habitual infractions of the rule. The best nun in the convent might show a momentary dislike to a duty, but if she were a truly pious religious, and aspiring after the perfection of her state,

she would at once remember the vow of obedience which she had made, and regret that she should, even for a moment, have infringed on it by a passing reluctance to yield up her will.

I believe few persons go through a novitiate without some trials of this sort, which, though perhaps arising out of trifles, appear at the time severe, and are manifestly allowed by God as tests of the reality of their desire to give themselves up entirely to Him. I remember two circumstances which occurred to myself. I was, as I have said, extremely delicate, and it seemed to me, and to others, that it was almost a miracle, how I was able to go through the duties with any regularity. When near my profession, I got a severe cold, and was attacked by neuralgia, to which I am subject. The attack came on in the evening; the next morning was Sunday, and the only mass we had on Sunday at that time, was said at seven o'clock. The mistress of novices was with me the last thing before she retired to rest, and the first thing in the morning. She saw that I had not the least idea of rising for mass, and I was annoyed, and I am sorry to say, I was angry, when she said she thought I ought to do so. It is, perhaps, some years before a convert enters into the deep reverence and sacredness with which a good Catholic observes every precept of the Church. It is a precept of the Church to be at mass on all Sundays and holydays of obligation; and it is

a mortal sin to remain away from mass unless serious illness or some actual moral impossibility occurs to prevent attendance. A mortal sin is, in the teaching of Catholic theology, a sin which kills the life of the soul, even as death kills the life of the body; and when we remember that it was sin which caused the death and sufferings of our Saviour, in proportion to our love for Him will be our dread of committing it.

I was not so ill as to make it in any way dangerous for me to attend mass, and I had not to go far. There was an organ gallery quite near where I slept, for the church and convent were all under the one roof, and I could go there well muffled up, and return again to bed. But the hour was so early, and my old habits of self-indulgence were so strong, that I rose with difficulty and not without murmuring. I believe that, if I had acted according to my own inclination, and not according to obedience on that Sunday morning, I might have lost the grace of my vocation and have been led on from one act of self-will to another. I need scarcely say, had I been seriously ill, as has been the case many times since, that far from being asked to rise, I should have been desired not to do so. But I have known as much self-will exercised by persons willing to do acts of extraordinary mortification as by those who were unwilling to do ordinary duties as directed by obedience. I remember the Superioress of a convent belonging to an active Order telling me of a

novice whom she had lately dismissed, and the reason was that this lady had insisted on spending part of the time of recreation in saying her prayers.

I had another trial also of a different kind when very near the time of my profession. My brother's health became delicate, and he made up his mind to go abroad with his wife and child. I knew that if he left the country he would probably never return. He was very indignant at my having become a Catholic, and though naturally amiable and apparently unprejudiced, he wrote to me to say that he would not come to see me before his departure; at the same time, he urged me warmly to come to him. It was, indeed, a hard struggle to refuse, but I never regretted having done so. Had I been a professed nun of course I could not have gone to him, for I had joined an Order where vows of enclosure were made. Even had I belonged to an active Order such as the Sisters of Mercy, I could not have gone to his house, and might, or might not have been allowed to go to some convent near where I could have seen him. But I was still a novice, free to leave the convent at any moment, free to go to him if I pleased. My Superioress did not interfere. If I had gone I could have returned, but in this case I should have begun my year's novitiate over again. This, however, did not deter me. I did not go. I had given myself up to the service of God in religion; could I dare withdraw even for a time? I knew how

many families are separated for years by domestic ties, why should not the holy ties of religion be equally respected? If a woman would not leave her husband or her children even for a mother or a father, however urgent their need of her presence, why should I, or any one aspiring to be a nun, leave the service of our Heavenly Spouse?

When I entered the convent a very old nun was then mother-vicaress. The general elections took place soon after, and by her own wish she withdrew from the office, and a younger Sister was elected in her place. This dear old religious was a little deaf, and had become rather absent from age and infirmity. After the elections she walked up as usual to her old place in the refectory beside the Abbess, but to the amusement of all it was occupied by the old Sister whom I have mentioned before. She was unable from lameness to come into the refectory in the regular order with the other Sisters, and anticipating that the late Vicaress in her absence of mind would probably walk into her old place, she had occupied it with a playful and amiable desire to prevent her the confusion she might feel in discovering her mistake. I never forgot this little incident, it told so much of loving thoughtfulness. This lady had also herself been Vicaress for many years until incapacitated by age.

The Sister did not live long after. Her deafness, which increased rapidly, prevented her from working

in the schools. She had no talent for fancy work, no strength for domestic duties, but she could not be idle. It was summer, and there was an arbour in our grounds, where she spent the greater part of the day. Her beads, and her few books of devotion, and any plain coarse work which she could get to do for any of us occupied her time fully, and if we might judge from her bright happy face, pleasantly. I used often to meet her with her stick in one hand, and her little basket in the other. She had one of those wonderfully strong constitutions which seem to have disappeared with the last generation, and with all her age and infirmities was still possessed of much bodily vigour.

In a few months fatal illness came on suddenly, but she struggled with it as only such constitutions can do. It was then I saw for the first time how a death-bed is watched and tended in a convent. Everything that the tenderest love could desire, and the most anxious thought could forecast, was done for the dying Sister. Two Sisters were with her night and day, and as her deafness and infirmity increased rapidly she proved a difficult charge. Her attachment to our young Abbess had always been very strong, but now she could scarcely bear her out of her sight. If she missed that dear loving face even for a moment she would call for her. At last she seemed scarcely to know night from day, and the only thing she did

know was the one dear face. The Sisters were all greatly distressed. Our Superior was at the time, and indeed habitually, in a most delicate state of health, and this constant watching and nursing might prove fatal to her. The doctor expostulated warmly, and then almost in anger. At last the young Abbess yielded. She promised to take one night's rest, but before retiring she exacted a promise from the infirmarian that she should be called at once if there was the least danger. All went well until a little after midnight, when the poor nun started up in her bed calling for Mother Abbess, and saying she would go to her if she was not sent for at once. She was not in a state to understand the absolute necessity of giving her Superior one night's rest, or she would herself have been the very last to break it even for a moment.

The Sisters feared to delay lest there might be any real danger. One of them went softly to our Mother's room, and awoke her gently as she supposed. She rose at once, and apparently was making a great effort to shake off the long-needed sleep. She went across her little cell, returned to her own bed, and evidently fancied it was the bed of the sick sister. She turned up the clothes, and appeared to be trying to settle her more comfortably, told her she was there, and that she did quite right to send for her; then she got into the bed herself, and with a weary sigh

like a tired child, lay back and slept, if indeed she had ever ceased to do so.

The Sister returned to the sick room, and contrived in some way to satisfy the poor invalid. Next morning when our Mother was told the circumstance, she laughed heartily, and assured the Sisters she had no recollection of it whatever. We were all only too thankful that she had even this brief rest.

I have already mentioned the elections. The plan on which these are carried out varies in some slight particulars in different orders, but in all the general arrangements are the same. In some orders, the abbess or prioress is elected for life; but in such cases, should she appear unfit for office, the bishop would have the power of deposing her. But so far is such a proceeding from being resorted to, that, as a general rule, it requires all the weight of episcopal authority to induce nuns to accept the cares and responsibilities of such an office. In some religious institutes, the Superiors are elected every three years. In some orders the same persons may be re-elected again and again; in other orders the Superior must not be re-elected more than twice continuously. Each plan has its special recommendations; but I think the latter is very hard both on Superiors and subjects. It is not every nun who is fit to govern others, and there is seldom more than one or two in a community really qualified in every way for such a charge. To govern well requires

experience as well as other capabilities; and it does seem unwise that, as soon as a nun has acquired this, those whom she governs should be deprived of the benefit of it.

In all cases the Sisters are perfectly free to choose whom they please. In general it is required that any one chosen to such an office shall have been five years professed, and that she shall have attained the age of thirty. Each Sister votes by ballot, so that none can know, except the priest who presides, for whom she has given her vote. In general three priests are required to be present at the scrutiny; and if any Sister is unable to attend through illness, two Sisters are obliged to go to her and receive the paper on which she has written the name of the nun whom she desires for her Superior. This paper she seals in the presence of the two Sisters, and they then return with it to the place where the election is held. When the voting has concluded, and the result is announced, all the voting papers are burned by the bishop, or the priests who preside. Thus no one can ever know who received votes, or who did not. Even the Superior herself does not know if she has received the votes of all, or only a majority. When general elections are conducted with one half the care and honesty of elections in convents, we may listen to some of the wild suggestions made by ignorant fanatics about inspecting convents. They may come to learn

something from us, but they certainly need not come to teach us any improvements in our domestic regulations.

The next most important event in convent life is the annual visitation. Every year, the bishop, or some ecclesiastic ranking next to the bishop in authority, is obliged to hold a visitation in every convent. I wish this subject to be very fully understood, for it is one of the greatest moment. Each professed Sister is obliged to see the bishop alone, and to answer candidly and openly all the questions which he may consider it necessary to ask; she is also at this time not only at liberty, but even bound in conscience to mention to the bishop anything which may have happened in the convent which she considers contrary to the rules of the order, or the general well-being of the religious. If a Superior showed more partiality to one Sister than to another, she would be bound to mention it. If a Superior acted harshly or unjustly towards any Sister, she would be bound to mention it. If any Sister was disrespectful, or habitually disobedient to the Superior, she would be bound to mention it. If any Sister neglected any office assigned to her, or if she seemed unsuited for the office, she would be bound to mention this also.

It is impossible, therefore, that anything seriously wrong in a convent could continue for any length of time. Of course much would depend on the prudence

and vigour of the bishop in repressing any evil; but bishops do not pretend to infallibility in their mode of governing their flocks, and it would be impossible even for a bishop to prevent a scandal from continuing if any one individual was so misguided and wicked as to continue to give occasion for it, in spite of his remonstrances.

I have said before that the fact of becoming a nun does not make a person perfect. Nuns are aiming at perfection; some attain it as far as human frailty can do so, others fall short by many degrees of the fervour and self-devotion of those more holy souls; and others, again—few indeed they are, thank God—live tepid, careless lives. Perhaps once in a century a nun is found, out of the thousands who have made vows, who altogether violates them, and who generally ends her career as an apostate from her faith.

Common sense would suggest that if the majority of the religious in any convent represented to the bishop that one of their Sisters was unfit for an office in which she had been placed, or was giving scandal by general disregard of the vows that she had made, the majority must be right. One individual might take an unfounded dislike to another, and thus view her conduct in a harsh and perhaps unjust light; but it would not be possible for the majority to be thus influenced. I know of an instance in which a nun was made mistress of novices by the votes of the community. After she

had been some few months in the office, some of the elder Sisters and the Superior saw that she was entirely unfit for the charge. They were mistaken in their choice; and such mistakes may occur. It would have been very unpleasant for the Superior or any individual Sister to ask her to resign, and might have been productive of unpleasant feeling afterwards. The visitation afforded a very easy and safe remedy. The Sisters who wished her to resign merely mentioned to the bishop individually that they considered her unfit for the office. The bishop saw the Sister alone afterwards, and told her that he found the majority of the Sisters considered, for reasons not necessary to explain, that they would prefer a change in the office of mistress of novices. The nun at once resigned, and the community were saved the least pain by this prudent management.

The bishop is also obliged to investigate the temporal affairs of the convent. No Superior can spend money as she pleases. In the first place, she cannot undertake any new building, or any new work of charity requiring an outlay of money, without the consent of all the professed Sisters. In the second place, she must have the permission of the bishop. Thus you will see how very incorrect the Protestant idea of a Lady Abbess is. She is quite as much bound by every rule and every vow as the Sisters whom she governs. Indeed she is more bound than they are,

for she is obliged to give them the first example of obedience and submission.

"Another protection to the religious is the regulation made by the Council of Trent, that an extraordinary confessor must visit every convent three times in the year.* All these regulations, made by the wisdom of the Church, are strictly enforced by her authority. Hence they cannot be explained away in any sense, natural or non-natural, which may suit the convenience of those who wish to evade them. Every week religious go to confession to the ordinary confessor. But this confessor does not appoint himself to the office, nor is he appointed by the nuns. The confessor is chosen by the bishop; and be it remembered that a priest, by his ordination, does not become authorised to act as a confessor. He must first be trained by special theological studies, tested by severe examinations, and finally sanctioned formally by his bishop, for without this sanction all his acts as a confessor would be null and void. Further, the Church requires, as I have said, that another confessor, called from this circumstance an extraordinary confessor, should visit the convent three times in the year, and at each of his visits every nun is obliged to see him alone. I had a practical proof of the strictness of this regulation a few months ago. I had been very ill for some time, and our own regular confessor

* See Note G.

came to see me nearly every day. One day he said Father —— was coming, meaning our extraordinary confessor. 'I need not see him surely,' I exclaimed; 'I am so ill.' 'It is a regulation made by the Church, and such regulations cannot be infringed,' replied the priest; and seeing I was still, I am ashamed to say, very reluctant to comply, for I hardly realised that under such circumstances the injunction could be binding, the priest took care to see our Superior before he left the convent, and to tell her that ill or well every nun must see the extraordinary confessor. This little occurrence led me to consider, and to admire more and more the heavenly wisdom of the Church. If nuns were left free to act as they pleased, the custom might fall into disuse; and if such a case could occur as that of a nun's being reluctant to confess a fault to the ordinary confessor, she would perhaps be ashamed to go to the extraordinary if she saw that others did not do so. The Church, however, provides also for the freedom of the individual; for although each Sister is obliged to enter the confessional, she is not obliged to confess, and may retire when she has received the blessing of the priest. I myself have done this many times, and at other times have made my confession as usual. On the occasion which I have already mentioned, I felt very glad afterwards to have seen the priest, even for a few moments. I had his blessing, and that was a grace I should have

missed had he not come to me; and I had a few kind words from him, and the promise, best of all, that he would say mass for me, and pray for me also. I valued his prayers not a little, for he is one of the most devoted and holiest priests in our diocese.

I cannot but hope that this narrative of my own experience of the practical working of convent life will tend at least to remove some prejudices and misconceptions. There is, however, one view of convent life, which obtains even amongst Catholics, on which I should wish to make a few remarks. It is what may be called the romantic view. The view is as old as the time of St. Francis de Sales, and older. If he saw it necessary to warn Catholic ladies of the fifteenth century against such misconceptions, how much more necessary must it be to explain them to non-Catholics.

The romantic view of convent life is so graphically described by the Saint, that I shall quote his own words. They occur in his twentieth Conference, which is on the subject of 'intention in entering religion.' I use the translation published in 1862, with a Preface by His Eminence Cardinal Wiseman:—

'The question which our Mother wishes me to explain to you, my dear daughters, as to what intention one ought to have in entering religion, is indeed the most important, the most necessary, and the most useful which can be discussed. Certainly, my dear daughters, many persons enter religion who do not

know why they do so. They come into a parlour, they see nuns with a serene countenance and pleasing manners, very modest, very happy, and they say to themselves, "Good God! how pleasant it is there. Let us go there, for the world does not smile upon us; we shall not find what we wish for in it." Another will say, "Oh, how well they sing in there!" Others come to find peace, consolations, and all sorts of devotions, saying in thought, "Oh, how happy the nuns are! They are out of the reach of father and mother, who do nothing but complain, whom one can never please; one has always to begin again. Our Lord promises many consolations to those who leave the world for His service; let us go then into religion."' The saint, after this naïve description of a young lady's thoughts, goes on to explain how utterly worthless is such a vocation, and to show in what a real vocation consists; and that in proportion to the greatness of the end proposed must be the means used to attain that end.

'We must learn how and what it is to be nuns. It is to be bound to God by the continual mortification of ourselves, to live for God alone; therefore you see that religion furnishes you with means well adapted to this end—such as prayer, reading, silence; and because we could not arrive at it without the continual practice of mortification of all our passions, inclinations, humours, and aversions, we are obliged to watch continually over

ourselves, in order to die to all these things. You who aspire to the habit, and you who aspire to holy profession, consider again and again whether you have sufficient resolution to die to yourselves, and to live only to God. . . . Whoever desires to live according to nature, let him remain in the world; and let those who are determined to live according to grace, come into religion, which is nothing but a school of abnegation and mortification of oneself; so you see it furnishes you with many materials of mortification, both interior and exterior. "But, indeed," you will say to me, "that is not what I was seeking. I thought that to be a good nun, it was enough to desire to pray well, to have visions and revelations, to see angels in human form, to be ravished in ecstasies, to be fond of reading and good books. What! I thought I was so mortified, so virtuous, so humble; everybody admired me. Was it not being very humble to speak so sweetly to one's companions about matters of devotion, to repeat sermons at home, to treat amiably with those that lived with me, particularly when they did not contradict me?" Certainly, my dear daughters, that may do very well in the world; but religion requires us to do works worthy of our vocation—that is, to die to ourselves in all things, as well in what suits our inclination as in bad and useless things.'

Then the saint, who was not without some humour, even in his instructions to his nuns, gives a graphic

picture of one of these devotees, and her dismay when she is told to go and assist in the kitchen or attend to some occupation which has not formed a component part of her romance of convent life. The illustrator of 'Echoes' little thought, while busy sketching his cartoon 'Romance and Reality of Convent Life,' that it would have made by no means a bad illustration for a chapter in the spiritual writings of St. Francis de Sales. Probably he considered his idea very original, very brilliant, and very much to the point. And so it was, for the case to which it referred; for the lady seems to have had a decided objection to domestic duties. But the deepest halo of true sanctity surrounds these much-despised occupations. Jesus was none the less God, and none the less adored by angels, when He worked at the trade of his reputed father. Can we for a moment suppose that He left His blessed Mother and St. Joseph to sweep the carpenter's shop, to carry water, and to bear all the burdens of domestic life? rather must we not think that He would save them every labour, and consider none too great for Himself? In themselves there is nothing attractive in such duties; they are a part of the penalties of a fallen state; but when they are done in love and for love, believe me that one may be as near, and nearer, to Jesus in the act of cleaning a grate or sweeping a floor as if kneeling before the Blessed Sacrament in the choir.

In an age in which every superstition is believed

with readiness, and marvels are sought after with frantic enthusiasm, it seems strange that the supernatural element in convent life is so little thought of. Even Tennyson, in his 'St. Agnes's Eve,' appears to have caught at least a glimpse of this when he makes the nun express herself thus:—

As these white robes are soiled and dark
To yonder shining ground,
As this pale taper's earthly spark
To yonder argent round,
So shows my soul before the Lamb,
My spirit before Thee,
So in mine earthly house I am,
To what I hope to be.

This is indeed the one longing and aspiration of the nun; her 'reality' is to come. The reality hereafter is her vision of beauty and of peace, and for this she prepares by present suffering and sacrifice. Yet even on earth she may be able to say at times,—

He lifts me to the golden doors,
The flashes come and go;
All heaven bursts her starry floors,
And strews her lights below.

And in truth the light of heavenly love in convent life falls most brightly and most frequently on those who have sought humble and lowly duties. I know that in an age when the very miracles of Jesus are questioned, I may meet with scant credit if I speak of the supernatural life of a nun. And yet is it not a miracle in itself that at this moment some two thousand

women, many of them ladies of rank, have chosen freely this much-despised life, and love it, and prize it more than a queenly throne? Surely no merely natural motives, no mere human benevolence, no mere romance would induce such a number of persons to persevere in a course of daily mortification and penance, to continue a life so contrary to every natural inclination. Believe me, without the grace of God, and a very abundant supply of that grace, we could not continue to submit our wills to the will of another, and to the constant pressure, gentle though it be, of a rule which has marked out every hour of our time for its own special employment.

Catholics are not in the habit of talking much of supernatural occurrences. In the first place, those to whom such favours are granted are generally most anxious to conceal them. Some exceptions, however, there must always be, and especially in the case of miracles where the circumstances must be known to many, and where God manifestly intends that they should be known for His greater glory. In the second place, Protestants profess such a contempt for them that fear of ridicule often, and perhaps unwisely, causes Catholics to keep silence about them. I often wonder how Protestants can reject the mass of evidence by which the miracles worked by the Saints are proved. Are they very logical in rejecting the testimony of perhaps fifty or sixty persons simply because they have

made up their minds that there is no such thing as a miracle? To such persons it would be useless to say anything on the subject.

I have already remarked that the grace which enables a nun to persevere to her dying hour in the practices of a life in every way contrary to her natural inclinations is in itself a sort of miracle. But even in our own day, miracles, in the ordinary acceptation of the term, are not wanting in conventual life. I know three nuns who have been cured miraculously within the last three years. Of two of these cases I can give some particulars. One of these miracles occurred in Italy; perhaps you will say, as usual, all these miracles occur in some distant place. The other miracles occurred one in England and the other in Ireland.

Of the miracle that occurred in Ireland I can give full details. The nun to whom this favour was granted had been some years professed. From childhood she had suffered from a tendency to spine complaint, and for several years she was obliged to spend a great part of the day in a recumbent position. As she grew older the danger seemed to pass away, but after her profession the weakness increased much. During the summer of last year (1868) actual disease manifested itself in the upper part of the spine, and the medical man who attended the convent, a Protestant, but none the less kind and attentive to the religious, assured the Superior that two or three of the joints of the spine were diseased.

A severe course of blistering was then tried, and at the same time another internal disease supervened which required the same applications both on the right and left sides, so that for several months the religious was confined to bed and in severe suffering. Scarcely had she rallied a little from this treatment, when she was seized with acute neuralgia in the head, in both temples, and in the ears; the agony was all but unbearable.

For ten nights she could not lay her head down even for one instant on the softest pillow, and the ingenuity and love of the Sisters who attended her was tried to the utmost to find some way of propping her up in bed so that she might have support without her head touching anything. She was thus enabled to get a few hours' broken sleep towards morning, but never until then. The effect of the disease in the spine had been such as to cause a tendency to convulsive movements of the limbs, most painful to herself and to those who watched her. Her limbs were at times flung out violently without the slightest power to arrest the movement, and after a time she feared she would lose the use of her arms entirely: for some months previous to this she had found it almost impossible to lift them above her head. Her sufferings were extreme, and she herself thought that her life would either be one of continuous and severe pain, or that in a few months she would be taken where there is no more sickness or sorrow.

About the beginning of December she recovered so far as to be able to sit up a little, and to attend to some of the convent duties; but the very week before Christmas the pain in the joints of the spine returned more severely than ever: she had never ceased to suffer from excessive weakness in it. On December 23 her Superior noticed how very ill she looked, and said she must be suffering severely. The Sister replied that she was; but if she could only get over Christmas-day, that she might not be deprived of the spiritual advantages of that great festival, then she would give up, let the medical man be called in again, and submit to whatever might be necessary. This was arranged. The Sister struggled on through the day. I should have said, perhaps, that it had pleased our Lord to make His will known in different ways to this Sister, and that before these months of suffering commenced she knew that some special trial was awaiting her. As she lay awake during the night she was thinking, as is the custom with religious, of the great happiness of receiving her Lord in the most Holy Communion, and trying to prepare herself for His visit. She began to consider for what intention she should offer her communion, and what special grace she should ask for at this holy time; and it seemed to her that if she asked for love, still more love of Jesus, that this would be all she could desire, and the best Christmas gift her Spouse could give. As she

thought thus, she heard an interior voice saying to her, 'Ask for faith:' this was repeated three times. The next morning, December 24, she arose as ill as usual, and could scarcely clothe herself. She offered her communion for faith, but without the most remote idea of what was to follow, for she had never even asked to be cured at any time. As soon as she had received her Lord she heard His voice saying to her, 'If you have faith I will cure your back.' And at that instant she perfectly recovered. Her joy at this most unmerited and most unexpected favour was indeed great; for very joy she could scarcely believe it possible. About an hour after, the Superior came to see how she was, and before the Sister had time to speak, she exclaimed, 'Why, you look so well!' The Sister yet remembers the surprised and joyful look and exclamation. She then told the Superior what had happened. At first the Sister supposed that it was only the actual disease in the spine which was cured, and that the weakness in it which had existed for years might still remain. But it has not been so. From that moment to this present hour she has not had one single pain or ache in the diseased spine, and her general health, though still delicate, has also been wonderfully renovated. Although she herself had never once prayed for recovery, and was only too thankful for the suffering, the Sisters had all prayed constantly and fervently for her recovery, and especial

prayers had been offered some time before for this end. No doubt the grace was granted in answer to the fervent petitions of so many saintly and loving souls.

The first of the miraculous cures occurred at Assisi on September 17, 1866. The religious belonging to the ancient monastery of St. Clare, in that city, were obliged to receive the nuns of two Benedictine convents into their house. The rapacious cruelty of those who strove to put down these abodes of peace and sanctity was such, that they were scarcely allowed sufficient for their support. In the name of liberty these poor Sisters were deprived of the exercise of it, and one of the nuns was carried in a litter, helpless and apparently incurable, to the monastery of St. Clare. She had been in this state for five years and nine months. She was subject to convulsions, to violent hemorrhage, and unable to sit up even for a few moments. The religious at this convent still possess the mortal remains of their holy founder St. Clare. For six centuries they have guarded this treasure, and handed down from one generation of Sisters to another, in unbroken succession from the time of her death, the memory of her virtues and her sanctity. Many miracles have been worked, and are still worked, at her shrine.

The Poor Clares, anxious for the relief of the sufferer, at once commenced to pray earnestly to their Mother and Foundress for her cure. They did not ask for an instantaneous and miraculous cure, but only that she

might recover so far as to be able to go to Holy Communion in the choir, to sit with the other Sisters, and to employ herself in some easy work. It seemed at first as if there was no hope of an answer to their prayers, but they still persevered. At last both the invalid and the Abbess of the convent were inspired with the idea of having her carried in her bed before the shrine of the saint. This was done on September 17, 1868. The poor invalid remained there for five hours, but still, though all united with her in prayer, there appeared no likelihood of a cure. At last, with the help of two of the Sisters, she was half carried and half dragged to the shrine, but the pain in her feet continued so violent that she was once more placed on her pallet. The nuns then sent for the Abbess, who had retired for a short time. She came at once, and was overjoyed to see the poor invalid even able to sit up. Burning with faith and charity, she threw herself before the shrine and exclaimed: 'O glorious mother St. Clare, I ask the cure of this spouse of Jesus and your client; remember the charity you always had for your sick children. O holy Mother, do not consider my unworthiness, but the place which I occupy. I beseech this grace of you in the name of the most Holy Trinity; I desire it, I desire it! remember that I occupy your place: do, then, what I ask.' Whilst she prayed thus fervently, the invalid heard an interior voice which said to her, 'I will grant you this favour

for the prayers of these good religious, and not for yourself.'

The remainder of the account I shall give in the very words in which they were related by one of the religious then present. 'Mother Abbess prayed with such earnestness that we were all deeply moved, and the invalid shed many tears. She besought the saint with her arms extended to cure her, and exclaimed with her whole heart: "I do not deserve this favour, I am unworthy of it, but grant it to me for the prayers of these good religious. I promise you that I will try to be better, my own St. Clare; take me from this bed; I promise that I will be grateful to you. I will visit your shrine three times each day; I will offer a light in your honour, and an *ex voto* in silver; if my community cannot afford it because of their poverty, I will beg it of others." While she spoke thus she rose up from her bed perfectly cured, and prostrated herself beside our Mother Abbess, praying, weeping, and thanking the saint. It was, indeed, a touching moment, and we were all deeply edified by the humility of the religious. We then placed a chair for her opposite the shrine, but she would not remain sitting. Nothing could satisfy her but to walk round the shrine, and then to embrace it again and again.

'To our amazement, she now walked to the sacristy, and we trembled as we beheld this prodigy before our very eyes. She wished to go to the choir of her

Sisters the Benedictines, but Mother Abbess would not allow her, as she would have to ascend several flights of stairs; but she sent for her Superioress, who came at once, and remained quite stupefied with astonishment for some moments. Then she wept, and thanked the saint for this singular favour. We now carried away the bed, and when the three communities had finished Vespers, they came to congratulate the religious; and we chanted the *Te Deum* together in thanksgiving for this marvellous grace. We also said some prayers to our holy Father St. Francis, who had helped us to obtain the accomplishment of our desires. After this the religious went to visit the chapel of our holy Father St. Francis in the cloister, and walked without support, except when she ascended the stairs, when a religious attended at each side of her. She knelt down in the little oratory, kissed the place where the blood had dropped from the wound in our holy Father's side, when she perceived the same odour as that which exhales from the bandage which covered the wounds, though she could not perceive it afterwards. We then conducted her to her cell and made her return to bed, from motives of prudence; but she first walked alone through the dormitory, and went to visit a sick nun.

'The next day she rose at six, assisted at Mass with us, and commenced the novena of thanksgiving; she did not lie down again until after dinner; soon after she went to confession, and did not return to bed until

after the evening *Angelus*. Her appetite has returned, and she can eat any kind of food, which she could not do before, as she was unable to masticate.'

I am quite prepared to hear it said, by those who do not altogether doubt every word of the above account, that the cure was the pure effect of imagination. No doubt imagination will do a great deal, but it could scarcely work a miracle; and Catholics, when such remarks are made, can only remember that our Divine Lord has said there are some who would not believe even though one came to them from the dead.

I have also myself known persons who have seen the departed, and have been visited by the souls in Purgatory. One case was that of a young married lady, who died after a short illness. Soon after her decease she was seen at different times by different members of her family. Still, though they were much alarmed, or rather perhaps because they were so alarmed, no one had the courage to ask her what she wanted. Her sister, a nun in our convent, was then living at home. One wild stormy night she and another sister were attracted into the window by an unusual light. As they glanced into the street they saw a lady dressed in white passing slowly along. They were much amazed to see any lady alone at such an hour, and in such a dress, but their amazement was changed into awe when they beheld the figure

pause under the window, and look up towards them beseechingly, with clasped hands.

Soon after one of the brothers met the spirit again in the house, and had the courage and the generosity to ask her, in the name of God, what she wanted. She told him in a few brief words that she had owed a small sum of money of which no one knew, and which still remained unpaid, and that she could not leave Purgatory until this debt was discharged. The family at once paid the sum to the person whom she named, and they never saw the spirit again.

I could fill a volume with similar accounts, but I am well aware that it would be useless. Scepticism imagines it can find an explanation of every mystery of religion, even while it is obliged to admit that it is often baffled by the mysteries of science. Have we not had even in our own days a Curé of Ars who has worked as many and as wonderful miracles as any Saint of the middle ages? and yet how few care to inquire by what power they were performed. Is there not even now in Belgium a poor simple country girl who has been favoured with one of the most sublime graces ever granted to mortal, and who literally bears in her body the wounds of the Lord Jesus? Sixty medical men have examined the case carefully, and admit that their science can afford no explanation of it. Since the time when aprons and handkerchiefs were taken from St. Paul to work miraculous cures, to the

present day, miracles have never ceased in the one true Catholic Church.

But one word more ere I close the pages of my autobiography of convent life. Let me say that even miracles will fail to convert or to convince unless another miracle is worked on the minds of the unbeliever. The liberal nineteenth-century Protestant is willing to tolerate nuns if they do some exterior deeds of benevolence, but it passes them by with contempt for their folly if there is no external sign of what they are pleased to approve. Alas! for these poor blinded souls, they see not the angels who come and go with these Brides of Christ. They obtain not one glance into the realities, the heavenly realities, of convent life. What will they say hereafter when they see these despised religious crowned by their Lord, not merely for their works of mercy, but also for their works of penance? What will they say when they hear then that some of those whom they had despised on earth had been even on earth familiar with the angels, and permitted to hold converse, as of a friend with a friend, even with the King of Angels?

CHAPTER XVIII.

SOME REMARKS ON THE SAURIN CASE — REPLY TO THE THEORIES OF DIFFERENT WRITERS—THE HIGH CHURCH VIEW—THE BROAD CHURCH VIEW — THE LOW CHURCH VIEW — THE 'GUARDIAN' AND 'CHURCH TIMES' — THE 'SATURDAY' AND 'LONDON REVIEW' — SERIOUS MISTAKES MADE BY ALL THOSE WRITERS ABOUT THE RELIGIOUS LIFE — NUNS ARE NOT MADE PERFECT BY THE FACT OF MAKING VOWS—NUNS ARE WOMEN, WITH THE FAULTS OF WOMEN, BUT THEY ARE TRYING TO OVERCOME THESE FAULTS — DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE GIRL OF THE PERIOD AND THE NUN—CONCLUSION.

I PRESUME the reader will admit that, as I have been for ten years a professed nun, I must be supposed to know something about the realities of convent life. I must at least have some knowledge of its practical working, and I have endeavoured simply and truthfully to impart that knowledge. The high position held by the publishers of this volume will be a sufficient guarantee to the public that the work is *bonâ fide* the narrative of a nun, and not a sensational 'make up.' I presume also that the public, which has shown so much interest in the Saurin case, may be interested in hearing a nun's view of it. For even those who have been loudest in their denunciations, or most condescending in their qualified pity for those whom they consider poor misguided victims, must admit that they

have no practical knowledge of convent life. They fancy that the Saurin trial has afforded them very wonderful revelations of it, though those revelations were not precisely of the kind expected. They looked at it as they would at a murder case, where the whole evidence *pro* and *con* could be easily understood, and gave their verdict accordingly.

Now, in the first place, allow me to observe that it was a prejudged case. The counsel for the defendants was obliged to call the attention of the Chief Justice to an article in the 'Times,' which he considered greatly prejudiced the case against his clients. When the judge had glanced over the article, he gave it as his opinion that it was rather a criticism on the monastic system than on the individuals concerned. His lordship was correct in his view, but I believe I am also correct in mine. The writer in the 'Times' condemned monasticism, and as a necessary, though perhaps unintentional, consequence he condemned those who upheld it. This is what I mean by saying that it was a prejudged case. The majority of Englishmen condemned what Catholics call the religious life; the bishops of the Protestant Church, speaking through the Bishop of Oxford, condemned it also. Hence, when a case arises such as that which has lately created so much public attention, they are at once prepared to give an unfavourable verdict.

I have been at the trouble of collecting all the lead-

ing articles on this subject from the principal English papers, and have classified them thus: Broad Church views, High Church views, and Low Church views. The 'Echo' has been witty, the 'Saturday' dignified, and the 'London Review' learned. I take each of these papers, or class of papers, as a type of the opinions of a very large portion of the public; for undoubtedly, though the articles in question are written by individuals, those individuals represent a multitude who patronise the paper because the writer's views coincide with their own opinions. It may not be quite the most logical method of arriving at truth to read only such accounts of any occurrence, or such statements of any theory, as agree precisely with our preformed opinions; but the public is not always logical, neither is it fond of exploring into deep wells in search of truth.

I shall take the view of the religious papers first. The 'Church Times' is sententiously dignified. The editorial 'we' has announced that the trial 'proves the uselessness, and the utter uselessness, of the Papal Supremacy.' The Pope of course ought to have come over to England and—done what? Seen Miss Saurin, and converted her at once into a true love of poverty, obedience, and chastity; or, if she was an example of all these virtues, he should have converted the Superior and the eleven nuns from their uncharitableness, as they all agreed that she was *not* a model of religious

perfection. Alas! it requires a mightier power than the Keys of Peter to convert a sinner from the error of his way. But the writer argues that Miss Saurin's conduct underwent an investigation, which both she and her uncle—a Catholic priest, who ought as such to be a model of obedience—pronounce to have been little better than a cruel mockery. 'If,' continues the writer, 'the Papal Supremacy were any good, it ought surely to have afforded the aggrieved parties something in the nature of an appeal.' One should conclude in charity that the writer of this article had not read the evidence in the Saurin case. The Bishop of Beverley was asked: 'Is there an appeal against your judgment, even if exercised erroneously, and if so, of what nature?' 'There is an appeal to the Archbishop, my metropolitan, or from him to the Holy See.' Even the Chief Justice saw this; and it seemed doubtful whether the case could proceed at all at one time, as Miss Saurin had not appealed to higher ecclesiastical authority, which morally as well as legally was the course she should have pursued. Charge number one therefore fails at once, for the Papal Supremacy *did* allow an appeal; but Papal Supremacy cannot prevent either nuns or priests from bringing their grievances before English law courts if they prefer to submit to their verdicts in preference to that of their own ecclesiastical superiors. Had there been an appeal to the Archbishop of Westminster, and an appeal from him to the Holy See, and

had the Holy See decided against Miss Saurin, there is no reason for supposing that she would have submitted. Those who cannot submit to their immediate ecclesiastical superiors are not likely to submit more readily to any higher power.

Then there is a not unnatural confusion in the mind of the writer of the article between Papal Infallibility and Papal Supremacy—a very frequent puzzle to the Protestant mind; and then there is a still greater confusion on the whole question of vows. The remarkable discovery is made that 'Rome has abolished monasticism,' because a Catholic bishop considers that a nun has violated her solemn engagements; and the 'Church of Rome' is accused of 'laxity,' because she is dispensed from the observance of a life for which her ecclesiastical superiors pronounce her unfit. The writer then assures us that the inability of a 'particular mother-superior to govern a particular nun was regarded by the Papal Court as a sufficient ground for nullifying the most sacred vow that it is possible for human being to take;' which is about as sensible a statement as if it were said that the inability of the colonel of a particular regiment to govern a particular soldier was regarded by the Commander-in-Chief as a sufficient reason for nullifying the solemn oath which the soldier had taken to serve his queen and country. The writer, after this brilliant display of mental power, arrives at the final conclusion, that unless the plan which he suggests is immediately

adopted, 'we may look out for constant repetitions of scandals like Miss Saurin's case.' As, however, the writer commences his very remarkable editorial article with the observation that 'it is quite clear nothing can be made of Saurin *v.* Starr as against the conventual system,' and adds, 'all it comes to is that one superior has been indiscreet,' Catholics may hope that their convents will continue to exist, and even that new ones may be founded, notwithstanding the terrible predictions of the Protestant editor.

The remark that the writer 'cannot see what injury was done to Miss Saurin,' which we find in one column, and the remark that 'she had been given her choice, apostasy from her order and apostasy from the Christian religion,' in the next column—the two remarks happening to be in exact juxtaposition—read rather quaintly, and do not enhance one's opinion of editorial clearness. The 'Guardian' credits a good deal of the differences arising out of this case to some 'common peculiarities of the Irish temperament;' but the case occurred in England, where these Irish ladies had been resident for some years, and such a case never having occurred in Ireland since the time when Catholicity was introduced therein by St. Patrick, one is tempted to suggest that English air, or climate, might have had some effect upon the case also. Until lately I had supposed that the 'Guardian' wanted to be considered a 'Catholic' paper, but as it talks about its 'Pro-

testant ears' being shocked by the letter of the Jesuit priest, we may easily pardon its utter inability to understand Catholic conventual discipline. The writer, arguing from the Protestant view, very naturally concludes that the monastic system is a failure because it did not convert Miss Saurin into a model nun. If the writer of this article had ever glanced at any work written for the instruction of nuns, he would see that they are addressed not as persons who are perfect, but as persons who are trying to become perfect; and that some fail utterly, not merely of perfection, but even of aiming at it.

It begins thus:—'Convent life does not seem to have tended in any way to correct these defects,' i. e. a 'defective education,' 'an undisciplined mind,' and want of 'refinement of manners and language;' and continues, if 'correct discipline is good for anything, it is good for undisciplined minds and ill-regulated impulses. If it fails with them, it is to no purpose that it assimilates minds which can readily adapt themselves to any system.' This certainly is Protestantism pure and undefiled. It is the very system which, according to Miss Goodman, is practised by Miss Sellon. This lady, in her 'Sisterhoods in the Church of England,' mentions the case of a young lady who was brought by her mother to Miss Sellon's establishment, with 'a special injunction that the rules should be permitted to fall on the hapless one in all their rigour;' and this poor

girl was in consequence held up in reprobation to all the rest, and treated accordingly. Such a circumstance was, it would appear, exceptional even at Miss Sellon's. Such a circumstance could not occur in Catholic convents. They were not intended, as the 'Guardian' seems to suppose, as reformatories for persons of 'undisciplined wills and ill-regulated impulses,' but rather for those who earnestly desire to regulate their lives and their impulses, and who are willing to do so. The noviciate is a time of trial, to ascertain whether the novice is willing to do this; if she is unwilling, she is utterly unfit for convent life. But, as I have already remarked, nuns are not infallible, either in their acts or their opinions; and once since the Catholic Church was established in England, some thousand and five hundred years ago, one nun has failed, if the popular view be correct, to profit by conventual observances, and, as might be expected under such circumstances, 'her faults became more and more developed as her convent life advanced.'

Nuns, whatever precautions they may take, may be deceived in the characters of those whom they admit to profession; and if those in whom they are deceived are deceiving themselves also, detection will be all the more difficult. But as increased graces and opportunities of sanctification are offered to such unhappy persons, they fall lower and lower, even as the very same graces raise those who are faithful higher and

higher on the heavenward path. As might be expected, the article concluded with a hint that the bishop was chiefly to blame, as he did not exercise his authority at 'a proper time,' or in a 'proper manner.' However, in the preceding article on 'Convocation Politics,' he lays down the law very decidedly as to what Anglican bishops should and should not do, and what they would do if they were of 'any real use in the House of Lords,' and 'if they do not want to bring their own ecclesiastical characters into contempt.' One can only hope that eventually a committee of laymen will be found to guide these unfortunate prelates, and to correct their many mistakes.

The 'Church News' 'stands aghast' at the whole affair, having constituted itself a judge of the case—which, of course, it must understand very much better than we do, as it is 'Catholic,' while we are only 'Roman.' Yet, strange to say, the writer runs off into a series of contradictions. Possibly a 'Catholic' Anglican and a 'Protestant' Anglican wrote the sentences alternately; or possibly individuals are divisible now into Catholic and Protestant, as the Anglican Church is, on the showing of the writer. The Protestant part of the writer's being 'stood aghast' at a nun being dispensed from her vows on grounds which no 'respectable Protestant husband in England would plead for impossibility of living with his wife,' and wonders 'how a convent of Italian nuns would like to be judged by

such a standard of truth;' and the Catholic portion of the writer says 'of the reported ill-usage no Catholic can think anything;' in fact, his Catholic half says the 'penances were remarkably mild, and every Catholic who has mastered the alphabet of mortification undergoes much greater trials.' He even admits that the convent might set an example to many of 'our own.'

We must suppose that it is the Protestant part of the writer which makes him bring this sweeping charge of 'untruthfulness' against Italian nuns, and assert that it was 'no credit to the Superior or Confessor that Miss Saurin was not able to subdue her faults.' Certainly it would be very delightful if our faults could be removed by proxy—what a pity that the plan is not more generally adopted! It must be a mistake to suppose henceforth that crime is the fault of the individual guilty of the actual commission; and for the future Anglican clergymen should be called on to account for the sins at least of their own families, if not of their congregations. Should any one prove hopelessly obstinate, despite all remonstrances, in a career of wickedness or disobedience, it would not, of course, be his own fault. It was also, no doubt, the Protestant individuality of the writer which states that 'the sentence was actually obtained from Rome before any investigation had been entered on,' although the Bishop stated in his sworn evidence at the trial, that 'without any special authority or rescript from Rome he could

dispense from the vows for sufficient cause;' and on August 15, 1865, he wrote to the rev. mother thus: 'Bear in mind that everything will have to be fully proved to make my powers of any avail.' The same Protestantism, after making this very grave charge against the bishop—without, we must suppose, reading a line of his evidence—condemns the evil which never existed except in the writer's imagination, by stigmatising it as an 'orientally despotic proceeding.' I should be sorry to hear that any Italian nun or Italian priest of the Holy Catholic Church could write thus. If they ever did so, it would only be when they had renounced the faith of their fathers for the creed of the writer.

The 'Catholic' individuality of the writer, however, appears again, and he finds in all this 'much to praise and little to find fault with.' The Protestant individuality appears in the next sentence, and the Mother Superior is accused of being 'incompetent' because she wished to cast off Miss Saurin, and did not make 'tender, loving exhortations to the wilful one.' Yet if the Protestant individuality of the writer had read the same Mother Superior's letter to her Bishop, in which she states all the methods she had tried and records their utter failure,* I think his

* At the trial a letter was read from Mrs. Starr to the Bishop, dated Hull, May 1, 1865, in which she implores his lordship to permit her to resign her office. She says: 'The principal points on which she errs are poverty, obedience, and truth. If I close my eyes to her faults, she perseveres in them with confidence. If admonished in all mildness and

Catholic half would have obliged him to admit that the most loving mother could not have done more. I have myself had many letters from Protestant friends accusing Mrs. Starr of great want of charity in not 'putting up' with Miss Saurin. But such persons forget that although a convent in some respects resembles a family, yet in other respects, and in fact in its whole foundation, it is very different. A person is a member of a family by no choice of his own, and yet if he disgraces his family he is frequently cast off from it, and banished from home, lest he should infect others with his bad example. A nun is a member of her convent by her own free and deliberate choice, and by her own free and deliberate choice she makes vows to observe a certain form of life and certain regulations on which that community is founded. It is a matter of injustice to other members of that community if she insists on continuing in it while continually violating the rules which are observed by every one else. The question is, not what her opinion of her conduct is—for few persons persevere in a course of evil and yet admit that they do so—the

charity, she denies them, and continues to transgress. If reproached with severity, or her faults proved, she assumes a tone of menace and defiance. If given a penance, which is rarely done, she continues it longer than she was desired, to show how little she cares about it.' In another letter she says:—'Although her brother is a religious, at the beginning of his sister's career he helped to make her what she now is. . . . I cannot blame him for this, for her powers of misrepresentation would raise an edifice of falsehood on the least foundation of truth.'

question is, what those who have contracted similar obligations think of her conduct. In Miss Saurin's case, rightly or wrongly, *every nun in the convent* considered that she had violated her solemn engagements, and that she had persevered for years in doing so, though every possible method was used to induce her to act differently. And let it be observed that the jury disbelieved Miss Saurin's own evidence on two most important points—the charge of assault or stripping, and the charge of imprisonment; on what grounds they were justified in believing her evidence on other points can only be explained by themselves.

We have already seen how the 'Church News' stood aghast; we shall now see how the 'Church Standard' enters its 'sturdy protest.' The Bishop is the main grievance with both writers, but the 'Church Standard' only repudiates the idea of a Catholic Bishop being addressed as 'my Lord,' and turns its attention to administer a sharp reproof to those who call themselves Anglo-Catholics for their imitation of Romish practices. At the same time it announces that the 'Maker of man designed him for a husband—the All Wise destined woman for a higher dignity than seclusion in a convent.' Dimly aware, however, that his 'views' were not quite in accordance with those expressed in Scripture, he adds that St. Paul, 'even amongst the Apostles, stood almost, if not quite, alone.' Granted even that he did, it would simply prove, what Catholic

theology teaches, that only a few are called to observe the counsels of perfection recommended and practised by the apostle; while the many are recommended to marry. And marriage is honoured as a Sacrament by that very church which is accused of rejecting it, and its ties are held incomparably more sacred in it than in those sects which despise or deny our Lord's call to leave all and follow Him.

The writer of this article also erects a sand-bag of his own private manufacture, and then dashes it to the ground with a clash of arms and a cloud of dust. He recommends 'Sir Alexander Cockburn's exhaustive summing up to those who think that freedom from the frivolities and faults to which flesh is heir can be obtained under the conventual system,' evidently thinking that this is an unanswerable argument against convent life—as, if it were only true, it would undoubtedly be. But if the writer would peruse any Catholic work treating of the religious life, he would find that no Catholic expects this blessed state of freedom from sin and temptation to exist anywhere except in Heaven. This, however, is a usual Protestant misconception, and unless it is persevered in when once explained, it is pardonable. The last sentence of the writer, in which he says that Miss Saurin's Jesuit brother has 'shown to what an extent the *religieuses* at Hull and elsewhere can hate and irritate each other,' is very different. The religious at Hull, one and all,

declared that they had no personal dislike to Miss Saurin whatsoever, and she never accused them of it. That they all loved each other truly and sincerely was sworn to again and again in the evidence. There was nothing said about *religieuses* elsewhere.

It is pleasant to turn from all this, to turn from the papers whose avowed object is the promotion of religion, and whose writers nevertheless seem incapable of fairness either in their criticisms on their own ecclesiastical superiors, on each other, or on Catholics, and to find in the 'London Review' a manly and able article on the 'Legal aspect of the Convent case.' Mrs. Starr is said, in fair criticism, to have shown weakness in the witness-box; and how could it have been otherwise, when she was broken down by years of illness and harassing anxiety? Mrs. Kennedy's evidence is approved as having, 'at once carried conviction, and obtained sympathy.' The writer is clear, and expresses his views clearly. Manifestly he has no partiality for the 'conventual system,' but manifestly he has a partiality for justice, no matter what his particular opinion may be about the case in question. In the same number there is a very able article, headed 'Getting at the Truth,' which criticises the Lord Chief Justice's cross-examination of Miss Saurin about her brother's letter, and in which its 'hysterical phrases' are held up to a very just reprobation. But the whole of the examination on this

subject referred to a question of very great importance; and the writer of the article seems to have overlooked the special object of the Chief Justice in his questions. The writer obviously thinks that the object was to ascertain whether Miss Saurin had, or supposed she had, a vision, and whether anything very dreadful had been done to her, and that by his compelling her to give a direct positive or negative answer to his questions he prevented her from explaining what she had said and had thought. This certainly could not have been the object of a judge remarkable for his gift of discriminating evidence.

I do not suppose any single individual ever believed for one moment that Miss Saurin had a vision, but her brother distinctly said in his letter that she had told him, 'under the secrecy of his priestly character,' that she had. Now the sole object of the Chief Justice, to put the matter into very plain English, was to ascertain whether Miss Saurin had deceived her brother, or whether her brother had invented the story. One or other alternative was obvious. The brother writes to the Bishop, and states distinctly that his sister had told this under the most solemn circumstances, and he gives details and particulars; he even gives her words. The Chief Justice very properly persevered, gently but firmly, in eliciting a reply from Miss Saurin as to whether she had or had not made this statement. This was a serious question. If it were proved in so

grave a matter that she had been guilty of untruthfulness, and had deceived her brother, what dependence could be placed on her assertions about the treatment in the convent? The Chief Justice expressed his own opinion very plainly on this matter in his charge to the jury: 'The brother's absence,' he said, 'had been attributed to the stern rule of obedience, he being a member of the order of Jesus; but he (the Chief Justice) attributed it to a different cause—that his sister had been guilty of the grossest exaggeration.'

The 'Saturday Review,' like other Protestant papers, although it writes in a very different tone, lies under the misapprehensions consequent on entire ignorance of conventual life. It recognises with simple commendation that such institutions as 'the Sisters of Mercy and the Brotherhood of St. Vincent de Paul, are not only religiously proper, but in some way or other remarkably suitable to large social needs of the present day.' But a few lines further on the writer asserts, what any well-instructed Catholic would at once deny, that the conventual life 'requires perfection—that is to say, it assumes it.' 'The profession of a nun or monk,' he continues, 'assumes that all evil dispositions are dead in them; that they have already acquired the exact discipline which their work requires; that they can be as self-denying, obedient, and abundant in every virtue as their vows assume them to be.' Now all this is the purest 'assumption,' to use

the writer's own words. I suppose he would admit—or rather, I am quite sure a writer in the 'Saturday Review' would admit—that as a nun of ten years standing I may be supposed to have some knowledge of the life; and I emphatically assert that all this is a pure mistake. It certainly would be very pleasant if the fact of making vows at once made us perfect. But such is not the theory taught in Catholic noviciates. We make vows to devote ourselves to a state in which we are expected and intended to practise the counsels of perfection. Three novices may make their vows at the same time, and one only of the three may attain to their perfect observance before her death. If any one thought herself perfect, it would be at once a proof that she failed in perfection from wanting the greatest of graces—true humility.

St. Francis de Sales told his nuns that if they were clothed with the robe of perfection a quarter of an hour before they died it would be well for them; and he quaintly observes that if he knew where this robe of ready-made perfection was to be found, he would secure it first for himself. 'Courage, my dear daughters; I have told you several times that religion is a school in which we learn our lesson. Let us do what we are able, and God will be satisfied, and our superiors too. Your passions sometimes make head against you, and therefore you say, "I am unfit for religion because I have passions." No, my dear daughters; that is not

the case. Religion does not consider it a great triumph to fashion a mind already formed; but it greatly esteems the reducing to virtue souls that are strong in their inclinations; for these souls, if they are faithful, will outstrip the others, acquiring by the point of the spirit what the others possess without any trouble.' Then he goes on to explain the mistaken idea of the world on the religious life; and be it remembered his world was a Catholic one, and that we should not blame a Protestant world, if it also makes mistakes. 'The Saint's Conference on Obedience' should be read in its entirety by those who really wish to know the meaning and object of religious obedience; and as the teaching of Catholic theology is unchangeable, what was written several hundred years ago is as valuable now as it was then.

Nor is the conclusion of the writer very logical. While holding the balance with tolerable firmness between Miss Saurin and Miss Starr, he weighs it down on both suddenly with the assertion that the 'case, as against this sort of life, whichever narrative is true, is equally fatal.' I admit that the 'case,' as understood by Protestants, against the conventual life, as assumed by Protestants, is fatal; and were even a tithe of their assumptions true, the sooner every convent in the world was shut up the better. But as a nun I protest against the Protestant view; and I cannot see, even were Miss Saurin as bad as her worst enemies suppose,

or Mrs. Starr as tyrannical as Miss Saurin accused her of being, how the case could be 'fatal' to convent life. Neither nuns nor superiors are infallible. I know an instance in which an extremely kind-hearted lady who had been a nun for some years was placed in the office of Superior. She proved utterly unfit for it. She worried herself, and she worried every one else, from sheer want of judgment and good common sense—the latter quality being especially needed for such an office. I believe, however, that those who submitted to her cheerfully and in the true spirit of obedience—which even in secular offices requires us to be subject to all in authority without regard to their personal qualifications—obtained for themselves a great reward. When a new Superior took her place, she was as thankful for the change as any of those whom she governed. But if even one nun had rebelled against her rule, instead of submitting quietly to her unintentional misgovernment, what evils might not have arisen! The nuns where this occurred might have had a 'Saurin case' also, and with perhaps more reason. Once more, let me request the reader to remember that nuns are women, that they have the faults and failings incidental to feminine nature; but while the 'girl of the period' gives free reign to her inclinations and fancies, to her frivolities and passions, the nun in the cloister is striving, more or less earnestly, to restrain those inclinations, to live for God alone, to devote her time to works of mercy rather

than to works of fashion, and to purify her soul day by day for that great presence-chamber where the Brides of the Lamb shall be introduced to their once crucified Bridegroom, clothed in white raiment. With Him they desire to suffer and obey, and be humbled on earth, that with Him they may rejoice, and reign in His heavenly kingdom.

NOTES.

Note A. Page 20.

In the letter of the Bishop of Chichester to Miss Gream, withdrawing his sanction from her establishment, he says: 'It is well known that I deny that the Church of England sanctions the habitual practice of confession. She acknowledges it only in rare and exceptional cases; and Mr. Neale is unwarranted in using it in the frequent and regular way in which he applied it. Those who admit such application of it to themselves, manifest thereby the inadequacy of their faith in Christ's promises. Their resort to this unauthorised remedy, by a righteous retribution, issues in a continuous increase of weakness [Catholic theology teaches, as we shall see presently, that the sacrament of Penance gives a continual increase of strength] and an accumulation of obstructions in the way of the true influences of grace upon their hearts.'

Clearly Rome and England are at issue upon this important question.

In the 'Sincere Christian Instructed,' by Right Rev. Dr. George Hay, we find the following explicit statement:—

'*Q.* 12. Is this sacrament of Penance necessary for salvation?

'*A.* As it is impossible to obtain salvation while we are in the state of sin, and at enmity with God, *and as this sacrament*

of Penance is appointed by Jesus Christ, to be the means of restoring us to the friendship of God, by cleansing us from the guilt of actual sins committed after baptism, in the same way as baptism itself is the means of cleansing us from original sin, and from all actual sins committed before baptism; therefore the sacrament of Penance *is absolutely necessary for salvation* to those who have lost the grace of God by mortal sin after, as baptism itself is to those who have not yet received it.

'*Q.* 14. What are the effects of the sacrament of Penance?

'*A.* (1) If the penitent be under the guilt of mortal sin, by this sacrament the grace of justification is poured down into his soul, by which the guilt of his sins is washed away, and he is restored to the friendship of God. (2) If he be in a state of grace, by the sacrament of Penance he receives an *increase of sanctifying grace*, by which his soul is rendered more holy and beautiful in the sight of God. (3) He also receives such helps of actual grace as enable him more effectually to avoid sin, and to persevere in the friendship of God.'

The Catholic bishop, teaching what his Church has taught him, tells us that this sacrament 'increases sanctifying grace,' and unites us more closely to God. The Protestant bishop says, on the contrary, that it is an 'unauthorised remedy,' and that its frequent use accumulates 'obstacles in the way of the true influences of grace upon the heart.' Even Dr. Pusey, whatever he may privately believe, declares it to be chiefly a 'comfort,' and says, 'the divines (of the Protestant Church) whose writings on this subject I have observed, seem to me to lay special stress on "comfort," as one object of it. [The inverted commas are his own.] They followed herein, doubtless, the language of the Prayer Book, which especially speaks of "comfort," and of "quieting the conscience," and of "avoiding scruple."'

Note B. Page 31.

I have compared the Rule of the Order of the Visitation founded by St. Francis de Sales, with the Rule of the Helston Sisterhood, and both with the printed Rule of the Sisters of Mercy. I am convinced that the Protestant Rule was compiled from that of the Catholic Sisters of Mercy. It may be well to give here an extract from the Preface to the Rule of the Visitation, which was written by St. Francis de Sales. He says: 'The chapter on the Expulsion of the Incorrigible is painful to persons in the world, who never wish to receive those persons again from whom they have parted; but, as the learned Azor (lib. ii. cap. 6) and Servius (de Inst. et Jure, l. ii. c. 40) say, with many other authors of weight, it is an article of canon law and a law of nature, and consequently a divine law. Thus St. Benedict, the great father of the Western Churches, has framed a special Rule on this subject, and, what is more to my purpose, the unrivalled St. Augustine gives similar directions in his Rule; "lest," says he, "an infect soul should infect a whole congregation." St. Bernard has said the same thing in different words: "It is better one should perish than many." And the good St. Pacomius wished to expel Sylvanus, and to deprive him of his habit twenty years after his profession, because he continued incorrigible.'

Note C. Page 60.

The work of the Spanish Pacomius Rodriguez on 'Christian and Religious Perfection' has long been the standard work both for information and instruction on the religious life. He says in his second treatise, which is on the three principal

vows of the religious life: 'St. Thomas says, that a religious is in a state of perfection; and this doctrine is taken from St. Denis, and is universally received by divines. It is not that as soon as we take the habit we are perfect, but that we then make profession to aspire to perfection. St. Thomas remarks that in the counsel Jesus Christ gives of voluntary poverty, while He implies a vocation to the religious life, "He does not suppose that he to whom He gives it is already perfect, but that he will become so if he practise the counsel He gives. For He says, not if thou art perfect, go and sell what thou hast, but only, if thou art willing to become perfect."'

Note D. Page 88.

The Council of Trent (cap. xv. sess. xvii.) requires that no one shall be professed under the age of sixteen, and further requires a year's novitiate before profession. In cap. xvii. the abbess is required to inform the bishop of the diocese a month before the profession, that he may see the person alone, and ascertain for himself whether it is her real desire to make her vows. The Council further exacts 'that should any abbess neglect such notice, she shall remain suspended from her office so long as the bishop directs.' The bishop, after he has seen the novice, signs a formal certificate to that effect, which is further sealed.

Note E. Page 176.

I have myself known clergymen who would place more bread and wine on the communion table, without hesitation, when that which had been consecrated was all used, and distribute it to the people. Quite recently there were some very severe strictures in the 'Guardian,' because the Archbishop of York and other dignitaries allowed the bread and

wine to remain on the communion table for the clerk to take away. Surely the bishops *must* know what is the teaching of their Church, and should be the exponents and practisers of its doctrine. If the Archbishop of York considered that our Blessed Lord was in any way present in or with the elements, surely he would not have left them thus.

Note F. Page 185.

A careful perusal of Challoner's 'Missionary Priests' should at once convince any unprejudiced mind that no 'celebrations,' whether high or low, were contemplated by the Reformers of the Anglican Church.

In the trial of the Rev. E. Genings, of whom it is related that he saw a vision in his childhood which was believed to predict the sufferings in store for Catholics, there was no further proof of his guilt required than that he had been captured in the act of saying mass. Those who had heard mass also at the same time were imprisoned for no other reason. In this case, as in hundreds of others, there was no question of treason. The fact of having celebrated mass, or heard mass, was considered in itself a sufficient condemnation. Before Mr. Genings and his companions were executed they were offered a free pardon if they would conform to the Protestant religion. Another priest, the Rev. John Wilson, was asked, 'what was his opinion of the religion now practised in England?' and he replied at once that it was both heretical and schismatical. (Challoner, p. 12.) The well-known Father Campion's dying prayer was, 'God save you all, God bless you all, and make you all good Catholics.' Certainly 'High Churchmen,' had there been any in that day, would have thought twice before they called themselves 'Catholics;' yet if Protestants were not 'Catholics' then, they

certainly cannot have any possible claim to the name they are so fond of using now.

Note G. Page 279.

Session xxx. cap. x., Council of Trent, provides expressly for this.

LONDON: PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE
AND PARLIAMENT STREET

00098311

Digitized with financial assistance from
Shri Brihad Bhartiya Samaj
on 20 February, 2020